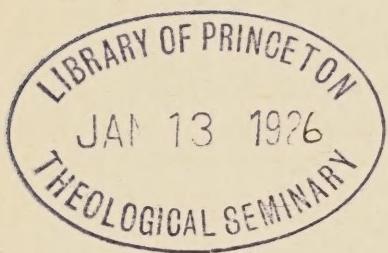


LIFE AFTER DEATH

ACCORDING TO CHRISTIANITY & SPIRITUALISM

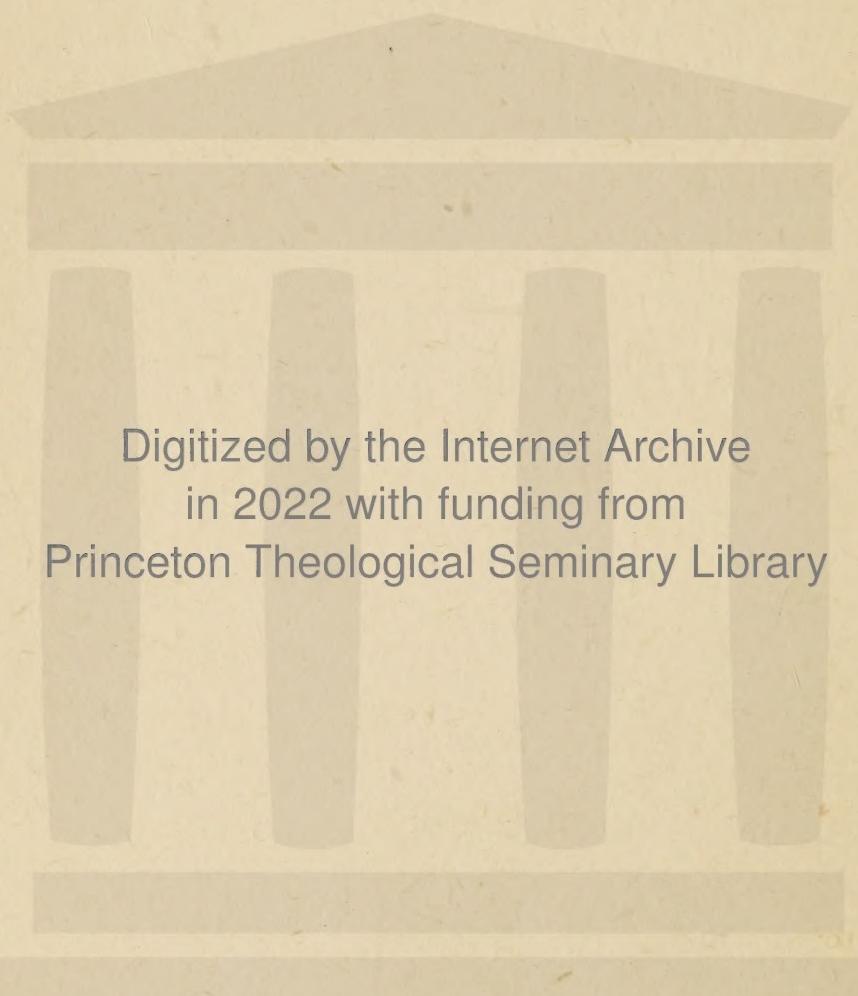
Edited by Sir James Marchant, KBE, LL.D.



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LIFE AFTER DEATH



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LIFE AFTER DEATH

*According to Christianity and
Spiritualism* * * * By

Bishop Welldon, D.D.; Sir Oliver Lodge;
Rev. F. W. Norwood, D.D.; Principal H.
Wheeler Robinson, M.A.; Rev. G. Vale
Owen; Rev. C. Drayton Thomas; Robert
Blatchford; Rev. Frederic C. Spurr *

With an Introduction by
THE BISHOP OF LONDON

Edited by
SIR JAMES MARCHANT, K.B.E., LL.D.

God is not the God of the dead, but of the living



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NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

The Editor wishes to state that each writer is alone responsible for his contribution, and for that only.

INTRODUCTION

By the Lord Bishop of London

I AM not sure that I should have promised Sir James Marchant to write an introduction to this work, if I had read through the chapters first, as I might seem to endorse by doing so views with which I profoundly disagree. For instance, my friend Sir Oliver Lodge knows so well my opinion on what is called “Spiritualism” that I think he will be almost surprised to find my writing an introduction to a book which includes his well-known views on the subject.

But, after all, on a great subject like Immortality we ought all of us to be big enough to state our own views, arrived at perhaps after much painful doubt, and respect the opinions of others who may have arrived at the same belief by quite another road; anyone who on whatever grounds opposes the materialism which so nearly stifled all belief in the last generation is in a true sense a “comrade,” though he fights with other weapons than those which one can oneself employ.

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For instance, I think that all this attempt to communicate with those who have "passed on" through mediums a great mistake. I believe that there is much fraud mixed up with the whole effort, that what seems a communication from the other world is really only due to telepathy, that it leads to much waste of time which should be used for improving this world while we are in it, that, even if the information so received about the other world was real information, which I do not believe, it amounts to nothing worth knowing, and only confirms on lower grounds the conviction that those who have "passed over" are alive, which we ought to be able to grasp on other and higher grounds. What these higher grounds are Bishop Welldon has explained in his interesting chapter, which is the first in the book, but, as a seeker after truth, who had to find my way from a state of great uncertainty to faith before I was ordained, I would like to state very shortly what were the convincing arguments to me.

(1). First there is this persistent *instinct of immortality inherent in the human race*. You find it everywhere and in all ages. It is as strong among the ancient Egyptians who actually put food into all their tombs for the return-

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ing spirit to eat, as it is among the tribes of Africa to-day who, before conversion to Christianity, behead a few slaves for the purpose of sending a message to a dead chieftain with the absolute assurance in their minds that he is alive, and that they will be alive after death to give the message.

Socrates, as Bishop Welldon says, drank the hemlock with the calm assurance of one who never doubted his existence after death, and this deep instinct in the human heart must point to something. The Prayer instinct is another universal instinct. As someone has said, “As the wing of the bird demands the air, and the fin of the fish demands the water, so the prayer instinct demands God.” In the same way the *instinct of immortality demands existence after death.*

(2). But, of course, it may be said at once that instinct may be disappointed and prove nothing. But when the *heavy artillery of reason* is brought up, it is found to support the instinctive longing of the heart, always assuming that you are prepared to believe in a God who has some sound reason for what He does and some worthy purpose in view.

On any showing (and all the more so if the

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theory of Evolution is true) immense trouble was taken with the world. Æons passed before life was possible on the earth; the world is a wonderful world and is clearly leading up to man as the end of creation. To my mind it is simply inconceivable from a rational point of view that God would have taken this infinite trouble for a creature which was to last but for a day. After all, we must at least conceive of God being as rational as the reasonable beings He has created. The God and author of Reason must be at least reasonable, and the more I think over it, the more unreasonable does it seem to me that this terrific engine of creation should have been employed to produce so little, it would have only illustrated the old Latin proverb: “Out of the mountain comes the ridiculous mouse.”

(3). But, of course, it really is *as Christians* that we feel so sure on the matter. I have again and again had to prepare the dying for death, and especially at the time of my visiting the Front during the War, and when some dying lad in some advanced dressing station in France, or far away in Bulgaria, asked me where he was going to when he died, I should have indeed been at a loss what to answer him

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if I had only had my Plato on which to rely. It was because I was a Christian that I was able to say, "My lad, if you die redeemed, restored, forgiven, you are going to Heaven, for the Son of God came to earth and told us in so many words, 'In My Father's House are many mansions, and if it were not so, I would have told you.'" In other words, "if the human instinct and desire for immortality were deceiving you, I would not have left you deceived and deluded. I would have undeceived you."

To endorse and confirm His promise, He died and rose again. "The Empty Tomb" is an integral part of the Resurrection story, for His appearance after His Resurrection was no mere appearance of a phantom or spirit, but He rose with a body, glorified and transfigured but yet the same body which had lain in the tomb, with the marks of the Crucifixion still on His hands and feet and side. "Reach hither thy hand," He said to St. Thomas, "and thrust it into my side and be not faithless but believing."

As Christians, therefore, we have hold of a certainty which no mere human instinct and no mere arguments from reason could give us.

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We do not for a moment hold that the same particles which lie in the tomb will form part of our resurrection body. St. Paul's teaching is perfectly plain on this. It will have the same relation to the old body as the seed has to the golden stalk, the appearance of which is none the less an absolute miracle because we see it happen so often.

But what is clearly taught in our religion is that the future life is life in some sort of spiritual body which will be as well adapted to the Spirit world of the future as our present body is to this world, that we shall recognize one another, as we do here, and that we are bound to those who have gone before by the same intimate tie of love and mutual prayer which binds us here.

“The Church above,” says St. Augustine, “loves to help peregrinantibus,” which may be translated “its pilgrim brothers,” and it is perfectly impossible that it is wrong (as used to be supposed) for the mother to pray for her son who has gone before, or for that son to cease praying for his mother in Paradise.

We Christians, then, who do not believe in mediums and who discourage seeking communication directly with those who have

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“passed on” receive great comfort from the belief that our dear ones are alive, that they are growing, we believe, in character and grace every day, that they are near us and often, perhaps, whisper sweet thoughts into our minds, that we shall see them with our own eyes one day, that they are praying for us, and like us to pray for them, that knowing how short the time is they want us to advance the Kingdom and carry on God’s work on earth as the best way we can use our time, and so we wait on and work on in love and patience till “the day dawns and the shadows flee away.”

A. F. London :

I

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW

LIFE AFTER DEATH

1

THE NATURE OF IMMORTALITY

BY BISHOP WELLDON, D.D.

THE question of the soul's survival after bodily death, and still more of its survival in immortality, may be said to be the most absorbing of all questions in its interest and dignity. For the future life of the soul makes all the difference to the present life, both of the soul and of the body. There are many religious men and women who feel that it renders, and it alone renders, the present life worth living. It has therefore been a matter of solemn concern to the deepest thinkers in all the long ages of human history. But nobody, I think, has apprehended its vital significance with greater intensity of feeling than Pascal. It will be enough to quote a short passage of his “Pensées” : “*L'immortalité de l'âme est une*

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chose qui nous importe si fort, et qui nous touche si profondément, qu'il faut avoir perdu tout sentiment pour être dans l'indifférence de savoir ce qui en est. Toutes nos actions et toutes nos pensées doivent prendre des routes si différentes, selon qu'il y aura des biens éternels à espérer ou non, qu'il est impossible de faire une démarche avec sens et jugement, qu'en la réglant par la vue de ce point qui doit être notre dernier objet.”

The doctrine of the soul's survival after death is the sole satisfaction of an instinct profoundly rooted in human nature. Man instinctively reaches out in thought and desire beyond the limitations of earth. In the infancy of the human race he feels himself to live in an environment of spiritual beings who were once, like himself, men and women. Sir J. G. Frazer has demonstrated by his extensive researches that life after death may almost be said to be an universal axiom of primitive humanity. But man in his historical development comes to realize that the plan of his being is conceived on a scale far ampler than that of three score years and ten. He asserts himself as the heir of an immortal destiny. It is only when he can look upon the present life as the vestibule

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of another life which is eternal that he attains or can attain all such happiness as is possible amidst the limiting conditions of humanity.

The future life, too, is the amplification of man's opportunities and responsibilities. If he is a creature of three score years and ten and no more, then his life from first to last is, so to say, poverty-stricken. But when he conceives himself as a being endowed with immortality, he ceases to be a pauper ; he enters upon a noble patrimony ; he is raised to a capacity of large designs and mighty achievements ; then at last he knows what it is to be potentially a king.

Similarly the future life is the solution of the intellectual and moral difficulties which encompass the present life of men. For human lives, as they pass upon earth, are never equal ; some are luminous with joy, radiant with success ; others are saddened by poverty and darkened by suffering, they never enjoy a chance of better things, they are doomed, as it were, to a sense of perpetual failure. But the vast spaces of eternity afford room for manifold compensations. It is possible that in them the soul will realize how the present life can be no more rightly judged in itself than a cathedral church from some point of view

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outside its spreading roof. Then will he acknowledge the wonder and justice of the Divine Providence which sees the end from the beginning, and will accept the full pleasures which it affords, and the pains which it inflicts, as ever tending to the realization of that end.

Above all, the future life is the vindication of God's righteousness. To the atheist or the agnostic this is not a thought which can make any cogent appeal. But to the theist, and still more to the Christian, its appeal is paramount. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" is a question which demands only one answer; and it is by the future life, wherein the inequalities and the apparent injustices of the present life may be redressed, that the answer is and alone can be given. The eternal justice of the All-Holy and All-Loving Creator postulates for His children a life not present only but future. "I believe in the immortality of the soul," said the late Mr. Fiske, "not in the sense in which I accept demonstrable truths of science, but as a supreme act of faith in the reasonableness of God's work."¹

It is necessary, however, to recognize not only that immortality is in itself a negative

¹ "The Destiny of Man," p. 62.

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word, but that, in so far as it connotes the idea of time, it is strictly alien from the truth of the spiritual or eternal life which is, and is shown in Holy Scripture to be, timeless. The grave moral disquietude which has been aroused in many Christian hearts by the doctrine of everlasting punishment, vanishes when it is understood that our Lord and the authors of the Gospels and of the other books of the New Testament, following His example, necessarily spoke of a timeless existence in such terms as were appropriate to time. Immortality then, or the survival of the soul after death, must not be regarded as either terminable or interminable.

But the doctrine of immortality needs to be distinguished from certain other doctrines which have been historically allied to it.

It is not equivalent to the doctrine of metempsychosis or the transmigration of souls. It does not assert or imply that the soul, when it leaves the body at death, passes into some other body; still less does it assert or imply that the soul passes into a body determined by its conduct within its first body. Metempsychosis, in fact, has always commended itself, as a belief, more naturally to the peoples of the East than

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of the West. It is a philosophical rather than a spiritual doctrine; and it is invested with something of the mystic character which is agreeable to the Oriental mind. At all events it fails to set the soul in any other relation to God after death than before it. It fails to satisfy the instinctive aspiration of the soul for a better and higher life than the life on earth.

Again, the immortality in which Christians believe is an immortality of the individual soul. It is not the absorption of the individual soul after death into the universal soul of Nature. There have indeed been, and there still are, thoughtful and devout minds which seem to find in such absorption, or, as they would probably call it, reabsorption, the means of harmonizing their spiritual instincts with their intellectual speculations. But these are minds which are inclined to Pantheism or to a Pantheistic Christianity. The loss of personality after death would be the loss of all that invests the life after death with its supreme value. It supplies at the best but a precarious justification of Divine Providence, it offers a strangely imperfect satisfaction of the hopes which emanate from the culture and progress of the individual soul, and it finds no warrant

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in the teaching of our Lord and His apostles. The immortality which it is the object of this essay to maintain is neither a temporary nor a conditional immortality. That it may be temporary, whether its end be absorption or annihilation, is an article of faith accepted by a few theorists, but never impressed upon the practical consciousness of mankind. The doctrine of conditional immortality has been advocated, and is advocated to-day, especially by Christians who have sought to find in it an escape from the overpowering terror of a punishment without cessation and without relief. It has been taken to signify that the good, or in Christian language the justified and redeemed, souls live for ever, and that all other souls die at the time of bodily death. But it is difficult to find support for the doctrine of conditional immortality in Holy Scripture; and if immortality might or might not be the fate of particular souls, what would become of all such arguments for immortality as are derivable from the nature of the soul itself? It is because immortality is felt to be a natural property of the soul that the thought of the soul as perishing or perishable is abhorrent to humanity. Apart from revelation, there is no possibility of

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drawing a distinction between souls in respect of their immortality. "The unconditional destiny of all men," says Bishop Martensen, "is immortality."¹ It is because the soul is what it is and does not change its essential nature, however greatly it may be purified or defiled, that the soul is believed to retain its life, and to retain it in immortality, after physical death. But whatever argument tends to represent immortality as conditional tends equally to represent it as doubtful.

Immortality, then, is the immortality of the soul. It is necessary, therefore, to consider not only the nature of immortality but the nature of the soul; and the nature of the soul depends upon the constitution of human nature itself. The English word "soul" is a translation of the Greek word *ψυχή*. But the Greek word is used in a wider range of meaning than the English. It is applicable not only to human beings, not only to the lower animals, but to plants. Aristotle, for example, speaks of plants as having souls, meaning by the "soul" of a plant what would now be called its life, i.e. the vital principle, which is the source of its growth. Similarly he speaks of animals as having souls,

¹ "Christian Dogmatics," p. 274.

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and here he agrees with some acute thinkers, both ancient and modern ; and he means by the “ soul ” of an animal not its life alone, but its mental and moral powers. It is only in man, however, that the *ψυχή* or “ soul ” attains its full importance, as the equivalent of all the powers which are not bodily, i.e. the life, the sense, and the reason, and of all these powers in their largest and highest capacity. But beyond this conception Greek philosophy did not explicitly advance. It did not formally recognize any higher faculty of human nature than the intellectual principle or the reason. It divided human nature into body and soul, and under the soul it included the emotional and intellectual parts of human nature ; but there Greek thought in its conception of human nature came to an end.

In passing from Aristotle to St. Paul the student of philosophy or theology becomes aware that he has entered upon a new region of ideas. St. Paul does not rest satisfied with the bipartite division of human nature. He recognizes, of course, like Aristotle, the body, i.e. the seat of the physical or material powers in human nature. He recognizes also the soul as the seat of the life, the sense and the reason

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in human nature. But to these he adds the $\pi\nu\epsilon\nu\mu\alpha$, or spirit, i.e. the spiritual faculty by which man apprehends God. It is essential to an understanding of St. Paul's doctrine in relation to human nature that the spirit should be as clearly distinguished from the soul as the soul from the body. The three elements or parts of human nature are distinct; they live separate, independent lives; and the vitality of any one of them need not be, and frequently is not, proportionate to that of the others or of either of the others. Thus a man's body may be strong, vigorous, powerful; but it does not follow that his mental powers will be acute or profound. Similarly a man's soul, and especially his reason as the highest part of his soul, may be penetrating, and by its penetration it may attain the knowledge of sublime truths; but it does not follow, at least in St. Paul's view, that, because the soul is highly gifted, the spirit will be highly gifted also. There have been men of the richest intellectual powers who have been deficient in the spiritual faculty, as there have been men of the strongest physical powers who have been deficient in the intellectual faculty. And if to St. Paul had been put the question, Why is it that some men of high intellectual

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endowment feel the truth of God's Being and Providence, and indeed of religion itself, to be almost axiomatic, but others find it to be unintelligible or incredible? he would have made answer that the former do, and the latter do not, exhibit the spiritual faculty, or the one exhibit it in a mature and the other only in an inchoate condition. For the natural (*οὐ ψυχικὸς ἀνθρώπος*) man, i.e. the man of body and soul or of soul alone, to quote St. Paul's own words, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, and he cannot know them because they are spiritually judged" (or "spiritually examined").¹

There is, then, in man, according to St. Paul's estimate of human nature, a spirit or a spiritual faculty. It is by the spiritual faculty that man is related to God. The affinity which exists between the Spirit of God and the spirit of man is a cardinal truth of Pauline theology. To quote St. Paul's words again, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

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children of God. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.”¹

St. Paul’s tripartite division of human nature may be said to be philosophically exact and complete. But it has not entered into the thought or language of Christians generally. There can indeed be no doubt that, if body, soul and spirit are all distinct parts of human nature, and if the soul is in point of dignity or capacity more or less intermediate between the body and the spirit, then the soul may be set in contrast either with the body or with the spirit. St. Paul opposes the soul to the spirit. He inclines therefore to disparage the soul in relation to the spirit. His conception of the soul as inferior to the spirit appears more evidently in his use of the adjective *ψυχικός* than of the substantive *ψυχή*. For *ψυχικός* is the word which is translated not only in the Authorized but in the Revised Version, as in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, by the English word “natural.” It occurs in such passages as “The natural body receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.”² “It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.” “If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body”;

¹ Rom. viii. 14-17.

² 1 Cor. ii. 14.

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and again, “Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual.”¹ St. James and St. Jude agree very much with St. Paul in their use of the adjective *ψυχικός*; for it is the word translated “sensual” in a well-known phrase of St. James. “This wisdom is not a wisdom which cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual (or in the margin of the Revised Version, “natural” or “animal”), devilish”²; and in a passage perhaps less well known of St. Jude, “These are they who make separations, sensual (or in the margin, “natural” or “animal”), having not the spirit.” But in the common language of Christendom “soul” is opposed not so much to “spirit” as to “body.” It includes spirit, i.e. it denotes the spiritual faculty as well as the emotional and intellectual faculties. It is so used even in the Gospels; for when our Lord says, “Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee,”³ or “What shall a man be profited if he shall gain the whole world and forfeit his soul (or “life”), or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul (or “life”)?”⁴ He means

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 44 and 46. ² James iii. 15. ³ St. Luke xii. 20.

⁴ St. Matthew xvi. 26.

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by the “soul” all that is eternal in human nature, and therefore especially and pre-eminently the spirit. It is in accordance with our Lord’s use of the word “soul” that soul and spirit are often interchangeable terms in Christian phraseology. For Christians frequently speak of “soul” or “spirit” as comprehending the higher part or parts of human nature; they lay little stress upon the difference between them. It matters not whether they say that a man’s “soul” or that his “spirit” has departed in the hour of his death. The contrast between bodies and souls is emphasized in all Christian literature, and nowhere more than in the solemn, familiar language of the Order for the Burial of the Dead: “Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of His great mercy to take unto Himself the soul of our dear brother here departed, we therefore commit his body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.” But the relation between the Spirit of God and the spirits of men is a fundamental article of the Christian faith. The usage of the words “soul” and “spirit” in the New Testament would seem to indicate that it is the soul and the spirit which survive, or the soul including the spirit which survives

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physical death, and will survive it immortally. If so, the necessary consequence seems to be that the eternal life will afford an opportunity of development to the emotional and intellectual powers as well as to the emotional powers with which humanity is endowed. It is surely a mistake to conceive the life of heaven as wholly occupied in the exercises of worship; rather will it be a life of increasing knowledge and insight. The reward of faithful service, as our Lord expresses it, is not mere psalm-singing, still less is it simple indolence; it is a life of augmented ability and energy. He who has done much for God upon earth will be empowered to do yet more in the after-life. Such is and must be the meaning of the Divine words, "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things."¹ "Because thou wast found faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities."²

It seems to follow that if the lower animals, as they are called, are in any sense the inheritors of a life beyond the grave, theirs will be a life conditioned by the limits of their own nature; or in other words, that it will be a life not of

¹ St. Matthew xxv. 23.

² St. Luke xix. 17.

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the spirit ($\pi\nu\epsilon\nu\mu\alpha$) but of the soul ($\psi\nu\chi\eta$), and that a soul not co-ordinate with the soul of man but possessing certain more narrowly defined characteristics of its own.

The immortality, then, in which Christians believe, in relation at least to human beings, is an immortality of the spirit or, more strictly, of the soul. The evidence for it depends partly upon the constitution of human nature and partly upon Divine revelation as enshrined in the New Testament. Jesus Christ did not argue for the survival of the soul after death; He assumed it and He enforced it. To Him it was an essential postulate of His Gospel. It was true because it could not help being true. For the spiritual life on earth is almost necessarily an anticipation of the spiritual life beyond the grave; and of all human lives His was the one entirely and absolutely spiritual. But he added to the immortality of the soul, as a complementary or correlative doctrine, the resurrection of the body. In the fourth Gospel, in which alone the raising of Lazarus from the grave is recorded, it is told how He said to Martha, when she came to meet Him, "Thy brother shall rise again," and when she declared her faith in the resurrection at the last day, said

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also, “I am the Resurrection and the Life ; he that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live ; And whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die.”¹ His own resurrection, which alone satisfactorily interprets the birth of His Church, sets the seal upon His doctrine of the corporeal resurrection. It is true, as Dr. Milligan has convincingly argued, that the body of Jesus Christ after His Resurrection was in some respects differentiated from His body before His crucifixion. It was a spiritualized, transfigured, glorified body. It was exempt from certain needs of the material body ; and it was endowed with certain powers transcending those of the material body. As St. Paul says in the fifteenth chapter of his first Epistle to the Corinthians, “If there is a natural body there is also a spiritual body. . . . The first man is of the earth, earthy : the second man is of heaven.”² It is not, I think, possible to define in language more precise the nature of the resurrection of the body or, as it is sometimes called, of the flesh. But the Acts of the Apostles proves that the resurrection of the body was a primary article in the creed of the Primitive Church. St. Paul, for example, at Athens was

¹ St. John xi. 23-26.

² 1. Cor. xv. 44 and 47.

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held to be “a setter forth of strange gods” (or “daemons”) “because he preached Jesus and the Resurrection.”¹ In all the creeds of the Catholic Church the resurrection of the body or the flesh still finds, as it ever found, a definite place.

But, apart from the resurrection of the body, the immortality of the soul is a doctrine irresistibly attractive, as experience has shown, in all the ages of history to the devout religious temper. It is necessary indeed to guard against treating the desire for immortality as though it were a convincing argument for immortality. There is a story of two American students who, when they were living as undergraduates in the same University, pledged themselves each to the other that if one ever gained any light upon the truth of immortality, he would not fail to let the other know of it. Twenty years or more passed away, and then the two friends met accidentally at a great reception in the White House, and, as they grasped hands, one of them said, “Any light yet?” The other shook his head; and neither of them perceived that their lifelong interest in the search for evidence of immortality was itself a witness to the fact of

¹ Acts. xvii. 18.

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the immortality, which was so dear to them. But, after all, human desires are often unsatisfied ; not seldom it is impossible to satisfy them. The desire for an income of £1,000 per annum is not, as J. S. Mill has said, a cogent reason for supposing that the person who desires it will either get it or ought to get it. But the human desire for immortality is not altogether like the desire for £1,000 per annum. It is rather a foreshadowing of man's proper nature. It is an indication that he does not and cannot feel himself happy in the narrow confines of three score years and ten. The yearning for a life beyond the grave has been compared to an eagle's beating of its wings against the bars of its cage. As the eagle shows by its action that it was born for the free expanse of heaven, so man shows that he was born for a spiritual and immortal life. "The scale on which we are made," says Dr. Martineau, "is conspicuously too vast for the short reckoning of our mortal years."¹

At the worst, immortality remains and, as it seems, must always remain a possibility. No scientific discovery, no philosophical theory has disproved or can disprove it. But human reason

¹ "Life," vol. ii., p. 446.

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is not justified in ignoring probabilities or even possibilities. After all, the initial language of the Creed is not "I know," but "I believe." But belief implies the balance of conflicting arguments and the assent of the mind to the preponderance, however slight it may be, of one body of arguments over another. Man must be said to act against the law of his intellectual being if he asserts, as a justification for his agnosticism, that the evidence for the Being of God or for the immortality of the soul is not entirely overwhelming. His duty is, if there are twenty reasons on one side and nineteen of equal validity on the other, to take his stand upon the side of the more numerous reasons. It is so that the doctrine of immortality, even though no more than a probability or a possibility, may not unfairly commend itself to his acceptance. As Richard Jefferies says, "If there be no immortality, still we shall have had the glory of that thought." For certainty of evidence, wherever it occurs, commands and must command assent. It is probability, or in other words uncertainty, although not complete uncertainty, which tests the moral character of human beliefs or disbeliefs. For "the will to believe," as it has been called, is just that virtue

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of faith which is, in scriptural phraseology, "the assurance of things hoped for, the proving (or "test" or "evidence") of things not seen."¹

Two arguments for the immortality of the soul have been often derived from its nature.

The one is the argument of immateriality. It is said that whatever is material is dissoluble and is therefore perishable, but that, as the soul is immaterial, it must be imperishable. The argument, as so stated, naturally influences such thinkers as recognize the spiritual characters of human nature, but those thinkers alone. A materialist who denies the immateriality would also deny the indissolubility of the soul. But unless the universe is wholly and solely material, there is a certain clear difference between the body and the soul. For the body may be, but the soul cannot be, divided into separate parts. There are in the soul no distinct, separable parts, like the head or the limbs in the body. But all that this argument for immateriality amounts to is that the body, which is material, is seen to perish, and that therefore the perishableness of the body is not a proof of the perishableness of the soul; at the most it affords

¹ Heb. xi 1.

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only a presumption, it does not constitute a demonstration, that the soul is imperishable. Yet the immaterial nature of the soul has made a strong impression upon many acute philosophical minds, both in the ancient and in the modern worlds. Socrates, for instance, is represented in Plato's *Phaedo* as reasoning that "the soul is in the very likeness of the Divine and immortal and intellectual and uniform and indissoluble and unchangeable, and that the body is in the very likeness of the human and material and unintellectual and multiform and dissoluble and changeable." Similarly Bishop Berkeley concludes his argument upon the nature of the soul in the words, "We have shown that the soul is indivisible, incorporeal, unextended, and it is consequently incorruptible. Nothing can be plainer than that the motions, changes, decays and dissolutions which we hourly see befall natural bodies (that is what we mean by the course of nature) cannot possibly affect an active, simple, uncompounded substance. Such a being therefore is indissoluble by force of nature; that is to say the soul of man is naturally immortal."¹ In my Hulsean Lectures, published under the title "The Hope of Im-

¹ "The Principles of Human Knowledge," Part I., p. 141.

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mortality,"¹ I have referred to theologians like St. Augustine of Hippo, St. Thomas Aquinas and Bishop Butler, and to philosophers like Descartes and Leibnitz, as contending in this sense for the immortality of the soul.

The second argument is that of the soul's indestructible energy. It is in this respect that the soul is often contrasted with the body. The body itself is dull, motionless, inert; the soul is active, mobile, energetic. It seems to follow that, if the body is quickened by the soul, then, as soon as the soul quits it, it returns to its original deadness, but that the soul does not therefore die. Whether the post-existence of the soul implies also its pre-existence, as has been the general belief of thinkers in the Eastern world, and as is the hypothesis of Wordsworth in his famous *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, does not greatly affect this conclusion; for there is no more difficulty in accepting the origin of the soul than of accepting the origin of life, as an act of the Creator. But the thought that the perpetual motion of the soul must denote its immortality has descended through the long ages of history from Socrates to Goethe. "The soul," says Socrates in the

¹ This chapter is based upon those Lectures.

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Phaedrus, “through all her being is immortal, for that which is ever in motion is immortal; but that which moves another and is moved by another, in ceasing to move, ceases also to live.” “The conviction of our continued existence,” said Goethe to Eckermann, “arises in my mind from the conception of activity. For if I work unceasingly until my end, Nature is bound to allot me another form of existence, as the present form can no longer support my spirit.”¹ Goethe’s words in effect declare that the dignity of man’s nature demands for him immortality. But Athanasius, in his treatise *Contra Gentes*, puts the argument for the soul’s indestructible energy in a form which is no less philosophical than it is Christian. “If . . . the soul moves the body, and is not moved by other things, it follows that the movement of the soul is spontaneous and that this spontaneous movement goes on after the body is laid aside in the earth. . . . If the soul is moved by itself, it follows that the soul outlives the body.”² The study of the soul indeed reveals certain qualities which seem to demand a higher and wider life than the present.

Science, Art, Literature and Morality are

¹ “*Gespräche mit Goethe*,” vol. ii., p. 40.

² Ch. 33.

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generally held to possess such a character as transcends the limitations of an earthly life. Knowledge, for example, is not local or temporary. It is not true in one place and not in another, or true at one time and not at another ; it is universal and everlasting. It is impossible to regard the achievements of the human intellect in the various sciences, above all in astronomy, without a sense of triumph which amounts to a consciousness of immortality. In Art, too, and in Literature, when they attain their highest dignity, there is an element akin to the Divine Nature. Who can imagine that the supreme works of a Phidias, a Giotto, a Michael Angelo, a Fra Angelico, a Raphael, a Titian and Murillo would have been possible, if these artists had not been inspired by faith in the eternal realities? What would have become of the *Faerie Queene* of Spenser, or the *Paradise Lost* of Milton, or the *In Memoriam* of Tennyson, if the genius of these great poets had not soared into the ethereal heights of Heaven? But the capacity of the soul for producing immortal works would seem to be a proof of the soul's intrinsic immortality. Similarly, truth, justice, mercy and virtue in all its many forms are essentially immortal ; they know not, nor can

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they know, the experience of death. But these are all ideals enshrined in the soul of man, and they must be acknowledged as indicating that the soul itself cannot die.

It is indeed probable that the strong conviction of immortality, as it has so often been a characteristic of the noblest souls, has seemed to afford in itself a convincing witness to the truth of immortality. Nobody, I think, can read the last discourse of Socrates in Plato's *Phaedo*, before he drank the fatal hemlock, without apprehending that his serene, inviolable assurance of his own future is more impressive than the whole sum of his arguments in relation to that future. The little company of his disciples who listened to his last words must have felt that he had already triumphed over death. Christians would generally assert or allow that the confidence of a person's immortality is proportionate to the sanctity of the individual life. To have lived in the intimate society of one, whether man or, as perhaps more frequently happens, woman, who has breathed, as it were, on earth the atmosphere of heaven, and has made his sick bed, or hers a very altar of sacrifice; and to have known the invincible patience, gratitude and cheerfulness of him or her who

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has dwelt so near to the spiritual presences as to be in effect already one of them, is to recognize that the truth of immortality is at times uplifted above all discord or dispute into an almost absolute certainty. But Jesus Christ alone has lived upon earth a life which was already eternal. His "meat," as He said of Himself, was "to do the will of Him that sent me and to accomplish His work,"¹ and they who had been the associates of His mortal life simply could not believe that at His death He had ceased to be; they knew that He was invisibly near to them, that He was incorporeally with them; and His resurrection was an answer to their faith which, if it failed for a brief while in the hour of supreme trial, yet could not die. So it was that of all the evidences of the soul's immortal destiny the strongest is the life of Jesus Christ.

In the beginning of the Book of Genesis it is stated that "God created man in His own image; in the image of God created He him."² The Divine image plainly consists not in man's bodily qualities, but in his intellectual, moral and spiritual faculties. It is upon these that the image and superscription of God are

¹ St. John iv. 34.

² Gen. i. 27.

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written. For those faculties of human nature which are most closely akin to the Divine Nature would appear to be consequently endowed with the immortality which is an essential attribute of the Divine Nature itself.

In short, then, the belief in God and the belief in immortality are generally found to exist together. The atheist—if indeed there is such a being as an atheist—or the materialist, as he cannot believe in God, does not believe in a spiritual world, or in an eternal life, or in immortality. But the theist, and still more the Christian, draws, as a corollary from his belief in God, the belief in the immortality of the spirits which God has created; for he feels the impossibility of justifying the ways of God to man, except upon the supposition of a life far transcending the allotted earthly lifetime of mankind.

Man's sense of retributory justice seems to demand the doctrine of immortality. There is in the Psalter a remarkable passage where the Psalmist confesses that his mind and heart were bewildered at the apparent prosperity of the wicked and the apparent misfortunes of the good, until he “went into the sanctuary of God”; and then, but only then, he understood

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the end of those men,¹ for then he apprehended that the prosperity and the misfortunes were alike unsubstantial, and that in the end the good would prosper, and the wicked would suffer, even upon earth. It is in another sense that a Christian gains intellectual peace and strength, amidst the inequalities and, as they may be held to be, the injustices, of the earthly life, by seeking counsel in the sanctuary of God. There he learns that the life of earth is all preparatory or disciplinary for another life. He learns that in the vast spaces of eternity God will compensate the undeserved blessings and sufferings of the mortal life by the perfect justice which will be accorded to every soul during its immortal destiny. That a man should “receive the things done in the body” is a principle fully accordant with the nature of God Himself. Jesus Christ in His portraiture of the final Day of Judgment set His seal upon the ever strengthening faith of the Jewish people in Divine retribution. It is possible to endure sorrows and sufferings, which may be held to be merited or even unmerited, in human life, if only the death, which is the end of the present life, is the portal of the future life eternal.

¹ Psalm lxxiii. 16-17.

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For God hath marked each sorrowing day,
And numbered every secret tear,
And Heaven's long age of bliss shall pay
For all His children suffer here.¹

But the thought of retribution is perhaps less keenly valued by devout souls than the thought of completion as a warrant for the faith in immortality. So often it appears that human nature all through the three score years and ten of its earthly life is being trained for something beyond and above that life ; it is disciplined, purified, sanctified for eternity. This progress, and above all this spiritual progress, constitutes the distinction between man and the lower animals ; but it constitutes also the convincing argument for human immortality. In the language of Mr. Fiske, “ To deny the everlasting persistence of the spiritual element in man is to rob the whole process (i.e. the process of evolution) of its meaning.”² Nobody, indeed, whose faith in the Nature of God is unclouded can well doubt that human life possesses a significance lying beyond the confines of the human years. If there is a God, as indeed there must be to satisfy the intuition or conviction of pious

¹ Bryant, “ Blessed are they that mourn.”

² “ The Destiny of Man,” p. 115.

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souls, then His relation to His children on earth must in the end, however distant the end may be, be such as will vindicate itself by its indisputable and inexorable righteousness; and such a vindication, which can at the best be only partial and imperfect upon earth, will be perfectly accomplished in the life that is eternal.

There is no doubt that Jesus Christ uniformly treated the eternal life as not only a reality, but the most real of all realities. The eternal life, as He conceived it, is not a life determined by the conditions of time and space. It is in no manner or degree related to the life of the body. It is not, therefore, subject or is not apparently subject to the changes which the body undergoes as e.g. to death and dissolution after death. It is a life of the soul or the spirit. It is in His own phrase an “æonian” life, which cannot be rightly described either as ending or unending. It is a life initiated upon earth, but consummated in heaven. It is perfected when the body or the flesh no longer impedes the spiritual vision or imagination, when the spirit of man stands in direct communion with the Father of all spirits. The eternal life then belongs especially and essentially to religion; for religion is the self-

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development of the soul or spirit; and it is by the spirit, i.e. the spirit of man, which is itself immediately related to the Spirit of God, that religion asserts itself as the supreme elevation of human nature. For to know God and Jesus Christ whom God has sent is life eternal, and that is the highest attainment of which human nature is capable.

To sum up, then, the arguments in favour of immortality: No student of human nature, except indeed a materialist who repudiates all spirituality in the world, will deny the existence of a spiritual faculty immaterial and indivisible in human nature, nor will anyone deny that this spiritual faculty is exempt from the characteristic signs of bodily death. It is therefore a possibility, not to say more than a possibility, that the spirit or the spiritual faculty will survive the death of the body. The immortality of the spirit, if it cannot be proved, yet cannot be disproved. But the belief in the survival and the permanent survival of the spirit, or, as it is sometimes called, the soul, is greatly strengthened by the theistic conception both of external nature and of human nature itself. For God is Spirit. It is in virtue of the spiritual faculty by which human nature

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is related to the Divine that the intuitions of immortality in human nature itself acquire a new significance. For if man has been created in the image of God, the eternal and immortal, then man's deep passionate longing for survival after death becomes itself a potent evidence that, however his spirit came into being, it has not been ordained to forfeit its being at the time of bodily death. The immortality of the spirit is an assumption necessary to the fulfilment of the Divine purpose which is achieved in the constitution and the evolution of humanity.

Not less is it necessary as a satisfaction of the instinctive moral demand that the inequalities of the present life should be compensated by the retributory character of the life after death. In short, man is a being so conspicuously designed for an existence of more than three score years and ten that his life, if it did not transcend bodily death, would be a paradox so painful both to his intellect and to his moral sense as to be practically unendurable. But if there is even a chance, although the preponderance of argument may be but slight in favour of the chance, that the higher part of man's nature survives the death of the body or the flesh, then the only reasonable life which man

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can live on earth is a life of faith in his immortal destiny. Great indeed would be his error if he were to base his conduct upon the assumption that his life were but transitory, and then were to find that it was eternal. But he who believes himself to be the heir of immortality feels as one who has been made the heir to a vast estate; and upon them all his efforts and energies are concentrated.

The immortality of the soul, then, is the one sovereign hope, interest, solace and encouragement of human nature. It inspires, it controls, it sanctifies human actions. It suggests and sustains the belief not only that God has become human in the Person of Jesus Christ, but that man by the grace of Jesus Christ may become Divine.

2

PERSONALITY AND THE LIFE BEYOND

BY PRINCIPAL H. WHEELER ROBINSON, M.A.

THE Theban Sphinx asked "What is life?" and made death the penalty of ignorance. Her riddle had been shrewder and subtler had she asked "What is death?" but then she would have condemned herself, for not even a Sphinx could have answered it. Of all facts of human life, death is unique in this—that no hypothesis about it can be proved or disproved by experiment, though the experience of it is universal. It is because of this paradox that our speculations do so abound, for who can give an authoritative "nay" to the wildest dreams or the most sentimental trivialities? Death still remains

The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,
Who keeps the keys of all the creeds.

Is there a door behind that Shadow which any of the keys will unlock, a door through which

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we pass beyond the Shadow into the dawn of a new day? Or is the Shadow that of an impenetrable rock, where man's only discovery will be that

—every mother's son
Travails with a skeleton ?

Even then, we might elect to take refuge in the reflection with which Cicero closes his discussion of old age : “ If I am mistaken in believing that the souls of men are immortal, I am content to be mistaken, nor do I wish to have wrested from me, whilst I live, the mistake that cheers me. If dead (as certain negligible philosophers deem), I shall feel nothing, nor do I fear to have my mistake laughed at by dead philosophers.”

We cannot cross-examine death, and learn whether its “ truth ” is the whole truth and nothing but the truth. But we can hear and weigh the testimony of life—the life that death so challenges. For countless generations men have analysed this “ life ” into a solid body and a shadow-soul, or some such wraith-like form. When the vital functions of the body cease—which is the dictionary definition of death—the poor wraith pursues its pitiful path in other realms. But its “ life ” is not worth the living,

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as the Greek Hades and the Hebrew Sheol abundantly prove; how could it be when the initial analysis has assumed that the body is the predominant partner, whilst he who “sleeps” can do not more than dream? Far more of this primitive animism than we usually recognize survives into our own times; it still colours—or, rather, robs of colour—our thought of the life beyond death, as it still influences our funeral customs.

If such a life is to have either cogency or value, it must have more, not less, reality than this; it must be worth while, because it is rooted and grounded in the best that is ours already; it must be the continued and progressive life of a personality of whose reality we are already convinced. That personality is much too intimately linked with our present body for the animistic conception to be true. Nobody knows what the exact relation is, but the evidence suggests that body and soul are rather brother and sister from the same womb than arbitrary business partners. But even this metaphor is inadequate to express the unity of the body’s service to the soul, and the soul’s influence upon the body. One of the most distinguished of our philosophic teachers, Professor Seth Pringle-

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Pattison, who holds and defends a Christian faith in immortality, does not hesitate to say, "Let us, then, finally dismiss this idea of the substantial soul as some sort of supernatural mechanism to hold the conscious experiences together, and if we must indulge our imagination with the picture of some bearer of the conscious life, let us be satisfied with the body, in which that life is certainly rooted in a very real sense."¹

He finds it sufficient to think of "the living body as the embodied soul,"² on the lines of Aristotle, and this seems a more satisfactory conception than, e.g. McDougall's defence of animism.

Similarly, the Hebrew idea of personality involves all the members of the body, apart from which the "soul" has no individual existence. The Hebrew conceived man not as a trichotomy nor as a dichotomy, but as an animated body, as against the Platonic idea of an incarnate soul. Such a view of the unity of personality, body and soul, need not mean for us that consciousness is merely a function of the body, and must necessarily cease to be with it. **The reality of consciousness is not dependent**

¹ "The Idea of Immortality," p. 103.

² *Ibid.*, p. 92.

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on our explanation of it. There is no scientific explanation of the fact of consciousness, and there can be no scientific disproof of its continuance after the body has served its purpose. If we resolutely put aside the animistic prejudice that the body is more "real" than the soul, which begs the question, there is no ground at all for saying that the physical fact or combination of facts which we call death can affect the supra-physical reality of consciousness. If it be said that man is merely a machine, let him who says it produce any other machine that *knows itself to be a machine*. No man, in short, is a consistent materialist in life; why should he become one in death?

We may go farther than this, on the basis of organic evolution itself. Professor J. Y. Simpson, in his recent book on "Man and the Attainment of Immortality," has examined in great detail the story of man's ascent from his remotest origins, and he brings out the succession of differing factors which make for survival in the earlier forms of life—"assimilation, sexual reproduction, muscular force, cunning or mind" (p. 228); "the method of Organic Evolution has been one throughout—that of selection; what has changed is the

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criterion of selection. . . . At first it was power of food-assimilation, then advance in methods of reproduction, thereafter physical force, then cunning or mind, and with the appearance of man the criterion has become increasingly a moral one" (p. 275). But if human personality is the costly product of so long a line of struggle and travail, and if new qualities are emerging in man that detach themselves more and more from the physical conditions of earlier life, is it not reasonable, in a rational universe, to suppose that this costly product of human personality is not flung away at the moment of physical death, when it has had time to show only the promise and potency of new development? Such an argument involves faith that the universe *is* rational, but that assumption we make in all our living.

It is perhaps not so much from without as from within that the reality of personality, and therefore its life beyond death, may seem to be challenged to-day. The psychological analysis of consciousness, reinforced by the study of anthropology, seems to trace much in us that we call "moral" or "spiritual" to earlier stages of our own conscious or subconscious life or that of the race. The result is that many to-day are

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tempted to ask whether the self (as well as the alleged realities to which it attaches itself in morality or religion) is not a delusion. Does not its natural history disprove its spiritual nature?

This is, of course, only another form of the Victorian dilemma as to the evolutionary origin of man. How can “origins” disprove values? Is it not just a piece of snobbery, Victorian or Georgian, to think less of a man’s worth or a mind’s worth because of their lowly origin? It is with the values of personality that the issue lies, not with our analysis of them, true or false. The true “origin” of personality is in God, and the discovery that it has earlier stages, whether physical or psychical, would in no way disprove this ultimate origin. However difficult it may be to define personality, there would be general agreement as to its salient features. “The Person is aware of and takes interest in Past, Present, and Future; is self-determined in approximately as great a degree as externally determined; and is consequently a centre of continuous conscious and deliberate activity”¹; “personality itself is a social category,”²

¹ Temple, “The Nature of Personality,” p. 22.

² Sorley, “Moral Values and the Idea of God,” p. 130.

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“the union of individuality and universality in a single manifestation forms the cardinal point in personality.”¹ Those three statements describe personality in its individual, social and religious relation.

One quality of personality which underlies all these relations ought to be specially named (for it intimately concerns our subject), and that is the nature of its unity. As Mr. C. C. J. Webb reminds us, “The unity of the Mind or Soul is of quite a different kind from that of the Body. . . . The Body as a material system is included within a vaster material system. The other parts of this system are external to it and excluded by it. On the other hand, the Mind or Soul connects itself with what we may figuratively call its environment not by *excluding* it from but by *including it within* the unity of its own experience.²

Thus personality is here and now creating its own world, gathering into its unity all that it may need. If we once reach the conviction that personality is undestroyed by physical death, then we have already in personality the content of a life beyond death, or the beginnings of such

¹ Inge, “Personal Idealism and Mysticism,” p. 103.

² “Divine Personality and Human Life,” p. 272.

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a content. For, as philosophical writers often remind us, the unity of human personality is an achievement, "although an achievement which would be impossible apart from a principle of unity operative from the very beginning of what can be called personal life at all."¹

In the light of what has been said about personality, we ought to be prepared for the assertion that religion is always the middle term between it and the life beyond. If personality is something in process of achievement by inclusion of values within itself from that larger world of persons to which it belongs, then it is committed of necessity to some kind of religious faith as the basis of that essential fellowship. This inference can be historically confirmed. We owe our Western ideas of a life beyond death largely to two sources—the Hebrew doctrine of a resurrection and the Greek idea of the immortality of the soul. Along both lines the faith was created by the discovery of a religious fellowship, not by the mere elaboration of the ghostly existence in Hades or Sheol. The truth is that religion has very little concern with mere survival, any more than it has with the actual length of a man's life. As the "Wisdom of Solomon"

¹ Webb, "Divine Personality and Human Life," p. 224.

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reminds us, “honourable old age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor is its measure given by number of years” (iv. 8). F. W. H. Myers tells us of a remark made to him by Ruskin, “‘Ah, my friend!’ he answered once when I spoke of life to come, ‘if you could only give me fifty years longer of this life on earth, I would ask for nothing more!’ And half that season was granted to him, and all in vain—for what Tithonus may tread for ever unwearied the ‘gleaming halls of Morn’?”¹

With all deference to Myers himself, the splendid protagonist of a passion for immortality, I must point out that the real objection most people have to Spiritualism is not simply that they consider its evidence defective, but that the contents of its professed revelation have no religious or moral value, or none that does not seem a ghostly copy of our own ideas. But the Hebrew faith in life beyond death began not with the Witch of Endor, but with the sense of fellowship with God that showed itself alike in the Messianic hope of a resurrection to life on this earth (Is. xxvi. 19), and in the sense of the covenant-love of God

¹ “Fragments,” p. 91.

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which breaks through the clouds of the seventy-third Psalm :

Whom have I (to care for) in heaven ?
and possessing thee I have pleasure in nothing
upon earth.

Though my flesh and my heart should have wasted
away,
God would for ever be the rock of my heart and
my portion.

(vv. 25, 26 *Cheyne's tr.*)

That is not yet a doctrine of immortality. But it comes very near to it, by experience of something untouched by the thought, and untouchable by the fact, of death—by experience, that is, of the fellowship with God which is the essence of religion. It was the same amongst the Greeks. Their doctrine of immortality was not a development of the dim life in Hades, but a positive declaration of new religious faith. This faith grew up in connexion with the mystery religions, especially with the Orphic cult from the sixth century B.C., and from them passed to its noble expression in Plato. As Professor Seth Pringle-Pattison says, “The underlying idea, the whole aim of the ritual, is the identification of the worshipper with the god. . . . That which is capable of union with the god must be itself of divine origin, and may

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be expected to pass after death to its native sphere.”¹

Historically, therefore, our faith in a life beyond death has been cradled in religion, would not indeed have been begotten without it, and history suggests that this faith will always depend on the nurture and inspiration of religion for any real quality it possesses. Such a faith at its best will not be over-curious about the details of the life beyond ; it has already learnt something of the standards of eternity. Its final argument will always be the love of God, the Divine nature which it has learnt to know in present fellowship with Him. The surrender of faith which underlies this fellowship in its Christian form is not the loss of individuality by absorption into an ocean ; it is felt to be the fuller realization of the true self. To such a faith, built on such an experience, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the final proof —not in the sense of being an isolated miracle, but as an example and prophecy of the working of a law of life that is universal. As Professor H. R. Mackintosh has put it, “The experience of Jesus was a test case, and like every test case, it fixed a principle.”²

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 24. ² “Immortality and the Future,” p. 178.

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Let us think, then, of the body as the scaffolding of the soul, first to be reared, essential to its creation, and already dimly showing something of the proportions of the building that shall be, yet doomed to fall without loss when its poles and planks have served their turn. If we wish to translate the metaphor into philosophic language, we may borrow Von Huegel's words, which summarize his profound study of "Eternal Life": "The sense, then, of Eternal Life requires, for its normal, general, and deepest development, *Duration*, history; Space, institutions; Material Stimulations, and symbols, something sacramental; and Transcendence, a movement away from all and every culture and civilization, to the Cross, to asceticism, to interior nakedness and the Beyond" (p. 392-3).

In this world there is often the irrational survival of trifles, as when the archæologist finds drawn on the marble of the Forum the lines with which some Roman idler played backgammon or draughts. The life beyond has no room for such trifles, though it garners their spiritual harvest. As Emerson says, "This homely game of life we play, covers, under what seem foolish details, principles that astonish.

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The child amidst his baubles, is learning the action of light, motion, gravity, muscular force; and in the game of human life, love, fear, justice, appetite, man, and God, interact.”¹ This is a realm where one illustration may be worth many arguments. When Cardinal Newman died, he wore by his own desire a silk handkerchief which had been left at his door more than thirty years previously by a poor stranger, with a message of respect. The handkerchief remained in this world, yet surely it was the sacramental sign of something that passed with him into the life beyond.

Let us hold fast to the conviction that it is personality with which we are concerned, the whole personality (as the Jewish-Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body implies) that has discovered its true self and its abiding reality in the fellowship of men and of God, and is the home of all that is of value to Him. That has both a negative and a positive side. Negatively, it re-echoes the teaching of Christ, and puts the emphasis where He put it. One searching word of His challenges a whole host of our speculations about the life beyond: “In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are

¹ Lecture to Divinity Students.

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given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven.”¹ If the most intimate tie of physical relationship is broken, so far as its present form is concerned, how much more shall we have left behind the poles and planks of all other structures that belong to our present order!

The eschatologies which men have so laboriously constructed are not without their value, though they belong better to Dante than to Aquinas. They are the necessary symbols of thought, as, in differing degrees, all must admit. But directly they become more than this, we are reading the eternal in the light of the temporal—we are staring down on the lights of the fair, forgetful of the starry sky above us. The one reality that gives continuity with the world beyond is personality, and the positive side of this truth underlies that other word of Christ’s: “Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel’s shall save it.” A man may lose all yet gain all, and the explanation of the great paradox is that, as Bourget says, “Nothing is lost when we make an offering of it.” The law of transformation is fundamental to spiritual life, the life of personality.

It is worth while to consider this law in

¹ Matthew xxii. 30.

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relation to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, which is really vital to our subject. That doctrine ought to include the "natural" as well as the "spiritual" creation, the creation of personality within the first Adam as well as the second. The Spirit of God transforms the temporal into the spiritual, and creates a soul out of a body, as it creates a spirit out of a soul, a new centre or nucleus for its own activities. The real existence of that new centre is in the Spirit, not in the flesh. The spiritual wealth of the man of clay is not really kept in an earthen vessel, which crumbles to pieces in due course; it is already, as Jesus said, in heaven. But the Spirit that created this wealth by transformation from things temporal can be trusted to refund the wealth of which it is the trustee, for the changed needs and conditions of life beyond death. The gifts and graces of the spiritual life are to be re-transformed (as Paul argued in connexion with his doctrine of a spiritual body) into new manifestations. In other words, the content of the life beyond must be thought out in terms of the Spirit-transformed life here, and as in the first acquisition, so in the re-transformation, "we receive but what we give."

If we apply this principle to the life beyond

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death, we shall see how it simplifies the problems men raise, without leaving us with bare and abstract solutions. In particular, we may confidently hold that the maintenance of a true Christian *individuality* by the Spirit in this life points to the retention of the individual values of personality in the life beyond death. Men grow not poorer but richer in God, and even a transformed self must still be a self—or there is no real continuity.

What kind of life beyond death is Christian faith to expect? The answer is in terms of all that Christian personality knows already through fellowship with God—in the widest and deepest sense—through the Spirit of Christ, a fellowship that does not sacrifice individuality, though transfiguring it. We think first of the ethical values, measured in terms of the ethics of the Cross—the ministry to others like that of spirits sent forth to minister to the future heirs of salvation, the ministry that we render so imperfectly here, but whose nobler amplitude we see already in Jesus. We conceive such a ministry as necessary in the world beyond—wherever indeed spirits are at many different stages of progress; we cannot tell how much such a ministry covers in our present experience,

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and whether the "guardian angel" does not stand for some deep truth of present experience.]

But the doctrine of the Spirit does not confine itself to right social relations, however fundamental they must be in our present stage of development. We think of what the vision of beauty means to the artist, the majesty of ordered sound to the musician, the intellectual interests of the scientist and of the philosopher; what infinite possibilities of "spiritual" life in all these realms are opened up in richer perspective and with wider horizons, through some ampler experience of fellowship with God, in Whom all these values are unified! One of the most un-Christian things Amiel ever said was that "latent genius is only a presumption. All which can be must come into being, and all that does not come into being was naught." Browning's familiar lines supply the Christian truth: "All I could never be, all men ignored in me, This I was worth to God." This is not said to suggest the hackneyed doctrine of a compensatory heaven. These present failures of ours do not make heaven necessary in order to vindicate God. Heaven is not God's vindication so much as His realization.

We must not shut our eyes to the fact that

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even the best of men have gone but a little way along this path, and that most of us at death are simply not fit for the rarefied air of the heavenly Himalayas. The actual experience of death, or rather of passing into new spiritual conditions, may have vast consequences and unknown powers of revelation. Yet it is difficult to see why the mere experience of dying, which has nothing whatever to do with the essential values of personality, should miraculously turn sinners into saints. To hold fast to personality is to hold fast to moral continuity, and there can be nothing artificial and arbitrary in the ways of God with men. Death may indeed reveal to us the meaning of personality as we have never before seen it, just as the building first stands revealed when the scaffolding is removed. Yet that which is revealed has been slowly created; the "catastrophes" of spiritual experience, like those of the natural order, are long prepared, and have their hidden and gradual history before their dramatic disclosure.

Moreover, we simply cannot think at all of personality as arrested and fixed into something wholly static at death. All personality short of God must be progressive personality, for it is finite life lived within the infinite.

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The progress of personality must depend on discipline, and discipline is always painful at some point or other. There is no necessity to call this development, which all will need, "Purgatory," because that term is apt to bring with it ideas which are unnecessary, and from our present standpoint may seem erroneous. The doctrine of Purgatory fixes the destiny of man at physical death, and usually makes his purgatorial suffering penal or retributive in the first place; does not Newman in the *Dream of Gerontius* plunge the soul into "penal" waters? But we cannot make the accident or incident of physical death the crucial point in the history of the creation of personality, nor is the conception of God as a Judge the highest we cherish, so that His relation to human personality can ever be expressed simply in terms of so much suffering for so much sin. Sin must always bring suffering, for it robs personality of its inheritance in God, and there are undoubtedly crises of man's history when he makes either a true choice or a great refusal.¹ But we have no sufficient ground for asserting that this decision is always made at the present stage of our development; indeed, we all realize that many men on earth have never had a fair oppor-

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tunity of making it. The New Testament itself recognizes that with its conception of "the spirits in prison" to whom Christ preached. On the other hand, if we realize the true meaning of eternal life, as something that is as truly "here" as it ever will be "there," a new note of urgency will come into the preaching of the Gospel, a note that is greatly needed to-day, when the sanction of "Maranatha"—"Our Lord is coming"—means so little to most of us in its older form. If every moment of time has its eternal meaning, then, as Newman taught, we stand already before the judgment seat of God, and rehearse in succession that which will be summarized beyond time.

But what of the fate of those who fail to realize their personality in God? I am sure such questions have been too prominent in Christian thought and doctrine. There is something unhealthy in being over-much concerned with hell, when man's proper business is with heaven. When we curiously question about the fate of other men, we ought to hear a Divine voice saying, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." The very mystery of the life beyond may serve as a moral and religious touchstone.

As a further warning, there is the marked

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difference of judgment amongst Christian men when they do speculate. Their minds have usually run in some one of three lines of thought. They have believed in what is called “the larger hope”—the final restoration of all men, through the victorious love of God; or in the everlasting suffering of the finally impenitent, as a just retribution for sin; or in “conditional” immortality, so that those only continue to live who are united with God through Christ, and the others are annihilated or cease to be. For each of these speculations a case can be made on grounds both of Scripture and of reason, and all of them are unsatisfactory, though a revised form of conditional immortality seems to be popular just now. Perhaps the reason that the speculations fail is intrinsic to the subject.

We are here in the presence of the solemn mystery of human freedom, the strange and unique power of personality to seek and find its own realization. We cannot successfully introduce any dogma that contradicts that fact of experience. We cannot do it, in regard to the past, by an Augustinian dogma of original sin or by an evolutionary theory of the origin of sin, either of which makes sin inevitable and

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necessary—for then it ceases to be sin. But neither can we do it in regard to the future by asserting that men will or will not turn to God; how do we know what use personality will make of its freedom under entirely new conditions? We do not know just where personality begins, either in the race or in the individual; how can we dogmatize about the manner of its ending? We cannot to-day look down with Jonathan Edwards on the torments of the damned in hell, and find in that sight a new source of joy for the saints in heaven; for that sight would rob us of faith in a really victorious God, a God who conquered by the Cross, and not by the methods of the crucifiers.

May it not be that the most Christian teaching is to say that we do not know, and that in the very nature of personality we cannot know, what the negative of personality is? Our concern is with the positive truth that we live in God, and only in God, and that without Him there is no life worth living. Our very ignorance may be the condition of the present challenge of God. He may be calling us to consider the inner realities of sin and grace, rather than their possible dramatic setting. He may have swept away the mists on which we saw ourselves

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reflected, that a land of far distances might be apparent. It is enough for us to know that as men may already enter into some experience of heaven whilst on earth, through their present fellowship with God, so they may know the meaning of hell through the lack of Him, in baffled and unsatisfied desire, in the anguish of unavailing remorse, in the horrible realization of their own uncleanness, cowardice, and selfishness. It is enough for the Christian preacher to be able to say to such a man, even though he be a Judas crying, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood," that he may be so far on the path of one who cried in that temple "God be merciful to me a sinner," and found acceptance. Let us be quite sure that God sees more good in men than we do, even though the sins hidden from other eyes are not hidden from His.

But the fundamental question in this realm of personality and the life beyond is not about others, but about ourselves. How much of the life eternal is already ours? "Once upon a time . . . a weary traveller came to the gate o' heaven, seeking entrance. 'What hast thou in thy heart?' said the good St. Peter. 'The record o' great suffering, an' many prayers,'

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said the poor man. ‘I pray thee now, give me the happiness o’ heaven.’ ‘Good man, we have none to spare,’ said the keeper. ‘Heaven hath no happiness but that men bring. It is a gift to God, and comes not from Him. Would ye take o’ that we have an’ bring nothing? Nay, go back to thy toil an’ fill thy heart with happiness, an’ bring it to me overflowing. Then shalt thou know the joy o’ Paradise. Remember, God giveth counsel, but not happiness.’”¹ To that parable we need but to add a sentence to make its teaching Christian: Joy is the fruit of the Spirit of Christ.

¹ “Darrel of the Blessed Isles.” By I. Bacheller, p. 162.

3

THE ATTITUDE OF JESUS TOWARDS THE FUTURE LIFE

BY THE REV. F. W. NORWOOD, D.D.

UNLIKE some of my esteemed fellow-collaborators, I have had no great psychical experience. There are certain remembrances in my mind and heart which are as sacred as anything can be, but I would not care to speak of them, much less advance them as grounds for the faith of others.

I do not say this with any feeling of satisfaction; neither am I sceptical nor out of sympathy with psychical research. I follow the discoveries and speculations of others with deep interest, and believe we have as much right to explore in this realm as in any other.

I suspect I am pretty much an average man in my attitude towards the future life, though perhaps my convictions have grown steadier and deeper than is the case with many.

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The average man is by no means hostile to the idea of the continuation of life. Neither is he sceptical. He is quite conscious of the paucity of what he could honestly call "proof," but he does not, as a rule, require very much argument in order to persuade him to make a very practical place in his thought for the hereafter.

He is somewhat of a pragmatist. It seems to him that one life at a time is about as much as he can hope to handle, and indeed he knows well enough that he does not handle that one very well. But it seems to him he would but add to the confusion by "calling in a new world to redress the balance of the old."

He has a healthy instinctive shrinking from the thought of death, and since that seems to him to be a necessary prelude to any personal experience of the hereafter, he lets both ideas drop willingly enough into the limbo of forgetfulness.

A normally healthy and fortunate man finds the present life interesting enough. He finds the terrestrial world full of beauty, thrills to the sight of the mountains and the valleys, the oceans and the rivers, the starry nights, the fleecy clouds, light in its inexhaustible variety,

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the song of the birds and the beauty of the flowers.

He even takes pleasure in the throbbing traffic of the city, the hum of industry, the pursuit of realizable aims, the battle against odds, and does not complain overmuch of the hard knocks of fate.

All this gives him an appearance of indifference concerning the life beyond the grave. But he knows well enough that it is a living question. Maybe it is his very love of life that causes him to demand some more adequate realization of it than seems possible under his actual limitations.

He has also his sorrows. He is not always masterful and self-confident. He touches at times the very bottom of despair and humiliation. He knows also that the full tide of life will not always be flowing with him. He sees the spectre of old age and eventual death, and hates it as an anti-climax to all his striving and endurance.

Perhaps it is his very resistance to death, and his abhorrence even of such foreshadowings of it as sickness and extreme misfortune, that keep his faith alive in some larger destiny. His refusal to think about death, though it with-

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holds him from long-continued thought of the life beyond, is, in a sense, the declaration of his faith.

It is safe to say that death touches him most poignantly and arrestingly when it comes to those whom he has known and loved. It is on their behalf that he first gives expression to his belief. He refuses to think that they have gone for ever. He does not speak of them often, but they come with silent feet not merely into the Hall of Memory, but into the heart's innermost sanctum. Many times they "appear" unto him, though in the majority of cases he would never dream of submitting the experience to any kind of scientific test. The average man is a fairly convinced believer in the life beyond.

Just now he is not so steady in his assurances as normally. The present generation has passed through shattering experiences. So many accepted beliefs have been shaken that it is no wonder if this one trembles abnormally. The greater number have grown more diffident than ever, while others seek for demonstrable proof with pathetic eagerness. But it need not be doubted that the balance will be gradually restored. Some kind of faith in a life beyond

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the grave may be said to be fairly normal in the human heart.

It is along the line of such thoughts that I approach the special inquiry which the title of this chapter indicates. "What was the attitude of Jesus towards the Future Life?"

With very deep reverence I reply that it was pretty much the attitude of the normal man.

Jesus is very disappointing if we look to Him for formal and logical pronouncements. The result is negative if we expect anything in the nature of scientific demonstrations.

I cannot discover a single instance in the Gospels where He offered to "prove" the reality of life after death. Even the story of the raising of Lazarus does not wear the appearance of a demonstration. Browning has given us a deeply interesting and suggestive impression of the changes that might have come about in the thought and conduct of Lazarus after such an amazing experience, but the Fourth Gospel is entirely silent upon the subject. Even the resurrection of Jesus Himself, decisive and even fundamental to the faith as it was, is not handled as science or psychical research would handle it to-day.

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Neither in such striking experiences nor in His ordinary teaching does Jesus give the impression that He is seeking to give men proofs concerning immortality. I do not say that such proofs are impossible or undesirable, but they evidently did not fall within the purpose of Jesus.

The late Mr. F. H. Bradley once said, "Metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct, but to find these reasons is no less an instinct."

It is perhaps unduly satirical to suggest that only "bad" reasons are to be found. The soul's beliefs, even if not logically demonstrable, are bound to be rationally articulate.

My statement just now is merely that Jesus based Himself upon what is normal in human nature. True, He lifted "normalcy" to sublime heights, but there was deep significance in His adoption of the title, "The Son of Man."

The whole controversy concerning Jesus throughout the centuries arises here. He never once removes His foot from what is common ground in human nature, but His head is always "among the stars." It is normal in human nature to believe in God, but whether we can

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carry through the complex experiences of human life a belief in *such* a God as Jesus stood for is a sufficiently big test. It is as normal to love as it is to hate, but whether we can eliminate the latter and maintain only the former is a question of perennial poignancy. Self-sacrifice is not less normal than self-love. With us all there is perpetual conflict between the two principles. To end the conflict by the conquest of the lower by the higher has been the struggle which all true followers of Jesus have waged; but the appeal is always to something that belongs to our human nature. Jesus is never once tempted outside the range of our ordinary humanity. This is at once the Gibraltar of His strength and the Mount Everest of His incitement.

In like manner He never stopped to reshape the current ideas concerning immortality which He found in His day, but He led them to a distinctive issue. The most casual reader of the Gospels knows quite clearly the kind of qualities contained in His concept of the "life eternal." It is safe to say that mere persistence occupies a subsidiary place.

The fact is that Jesus made no break between what we call mortal life and immortality.

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He reduced death to a position of insignificance. He spoke as if it might be virtually eliminated by a certain attitude of mind. "He that heareth my word, and believeth Him that sent me, *hath* eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but *hath* passed out of death into life." (John v. 24.)

His idea was to enrich life in all its content and meaning. "I came that they may have life and may have it abundantly."

There can be no question that it was the impression which He made upon those who knew Him best of exceeding vitality that made it possible for them to believe in His resurrection from the dead. It was not simply that they believed in His persistence, but they believed in His undiminished and even amplified power.

Normally it is the case with us all, even when we are assured of the persistence of the soul's life, to experience a sudden slackening of anticipation when some great personality has been overtaken by death. If Mussolini died to-morrow we should look around for some new leader in Italy and would expect a diminution or at least a readjustment of Fascist policies. The disciples had such a feeling.

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Who can miss the tone of regret in the words of the two who journeyed to Emmaus : “ We hoped that it was He which should redeem Israel.” (Luke xxiv. 21.)

From the temporary shattering of their hopes the disciples suddenly recovered themselves at Pentecost. Simon Peter was forced to deliver an apologetic before he had time to think it out carefully. It is instructive to see what idea immediately occurred to him. It was the first public statement ever made concerning Jesus and the After Life. Peter fell back upon intuition rather than upon formal logic. This is what he said :

Ye men of Israel, hear these words : Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know ; Him being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hands of lawless men did crucify and slay ; whom God raised up having loosed the pangs of death ; *because* (and this is the apposite clause) *it was not possible that he should be holden of it.*

Think of the qualitative grandeur that for Simon Peter was summed up in the pronoun “ He ” ; then think of the mean degradation that was summed up in the word “ it ” by

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which he indicates the death by the cross, and you understand what he felt, that the lesser could not hold the greater. Christ was simply too great and vital for death to hold.

That was at once a perfectly normal and an essentially Christian idea. It illustrates the attitude of Jesus towards the future life and shows that the disciple had grasped it. Life is simply too big for death to hold.

That, if I mistake not, is the basis of the average man's persistent faith in the Future Life, and I think it not derogatory to say that it seems to me also to be essentially the teaching of Jesus.

We have acquired almost a habit of speaking of the soul as if it were something extra, superadded to man to distinguish him from creatures of lower status—something spiritual as contrasted with what is material, something immortal in opposition to what is mortal.

I can find no suggestion of such a concept in the words of Jesus. He used one word only which our translators have sometimes rendered as "life" and sometimes as "soul." Our multiplication of words has not increased lucidity. Life is that which is superior to death; that which death cannot "hold."

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For the normal man life is very imperfect. He is subject to the ills of the flesh, the victim of many temptations, the sport of many circumstances. He persists in believing that for all that there is something within him that deserves not to die. It may be as Bradley suggests, an "instinct" rather than a reason, but man can almost as easily shed his skin as shed his instincts.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust :

Thou madest man, he knows not why ;
He thinks he was not made to die ;
And Thou hast made him : Thou art just.

Jesus does not confront the problem as a logician, as a metaphysician, as a scientist ; but the most luminous, intuitive, mystical and withal the purest being whom the world has seen, allies Himself with the normal though vague belief and aspiration of the common run of us, assuring us that we are children of God and therefore destined to reach Home rather than a charnel-house.

This is not to reduce Jesus to the status of the average man. The uniqueness of His personality and the authority of His message stand upon other grounds and require much

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fuller treatment than the limits of this chapter make possible. The follower of Jesus does, however, find himself encouraged to trust more fully the deepest voices of his own heart. The "attitude" of Jesus towards the future life is that of radiant vitality. He based His teaching upon something deeper than argument and superior to demonstration. He is all the more authoritative because He strengthens the authority of the best in our human nature.

II

THE TESTIMONY OF SPIRITUALISM

1

THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

By THE REV. G. VALE OWEN

ON a beautiful August night a few months ago I stood on Dartmoor. I looked to the east where the glow, low down on the horizon, showed where lay the city of Exeter. Around me was stillness, broken only by the rippling of the neighbouring brook or the tired lowing of the cattle in their stalls at the farm across the moor-road.

Above me stretched the far reaches of the deeps of space, lonely and tenantless, except where some far-away sun scintillated forth from itself its terrific stream of energy which I beheld as light. Planets also there were intermingled, but only a very few. And these had no light of their own; only what they could catch and reflect from the stars. It was the stars which held me. Those two there in Andromeda. They only seemed about a yard distant from each other. Yet if I were to start from one in

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an aeroplane travelling at the rate of two hundred miles an hour, how long would it take me to reach the other? A thousand years perhaps; perhaps twenty thousand.

Then there was that other big fellow close by the other two. And yet he might be a few million miles nearer me or farther away. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of light-years from where I stood, maybe. Think of the awful solitude of that vast region which stretched between those suns and me. Yet the stream of light which left them all those years ago can travel over that terrible void and reach me here on Dartmoor. Scientists tell me that I am not looking at emptiness really. They say the whole space between me and that star is filled with ether. Yet I can see that star through it all, millions or trillions of miles away.

There are others who tell us another thing more wonderful still. They say that even the ether is not empty; that it is thickly populated by intelligent beings. Some of these have lived on earth as I am doing now. They go into that ethereal environment through the gate of death.

Exactly, but, if this be so, why cannot I

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see them? When I am looking at that star I must be looking through the bodies of millions of these kinsmen of mine. Yet I can see nothing of them. If there be any such, how remote in condition from us they must be whose bodies are of such etherealized substance that, in the mass, they are invisible to the human eye. Is there such a realm as this would connote? And are there such beings? Is it possible that what I have taught others is based on no more sure foundation than the will-to-believe? After all, how do we know anything about such survival of death—except what the Old Book tells us and the theories men base upon its doctrines?

Then I turned round and saw the glow of the red-curtained windows of our cottage, and conviction suddenly came to my mind. No need of further speculation as to whether the existence of beings so diaphanous be possible or no. I had been talking with some of them not half an hour before. In that little room behind those red curtains I and my family had been talking with them as friend to friend. Also, whatever significance we attach to such qualities as visibility, tangibility or other, they had at least proved their substantiality to such

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a degree as to have been able to establish their contact with the material world by knocking upon the table and sideboard. So do angel visitants usually announce their coming, just as distinctly and as naturally as I, good reader, would do were I to come to your door to pay you a call.

To the early Church, whose members knew and prized the psychic gifts to an extent which their successors hardly realize at the present day, the words of the arisen Lord may have had a very literal significance, “Listen! I have been standing at your door; and I am knocking. If there is anyone that can hear my voice, and will open the door (between the two states of life), I will come in and will feast with him, and he with me.”¹

The knocking was a signal that there was a message to be given; a heavenly Visitor was paying a call.

A few weeks ago I had a conversation with a group of clergy who were invited by my host to meet me at his house. One of them said to me, “But I do preach quite openly to my people the fact that in the future life we shall

¹ Rev. iii. 20.

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not spend our time in eternally playing harps and singing praises, but that we shall be engaged in useful occupations also. What more can I do?"

I replied, "But suppose one of your people were to come to you after such a sermon and ask, 'How do you know all this?' What would you say?" As he remained silent, I continued, "I should be able to tell him that I had talked with people who live in that bright world and they tell me these things are so. That is how I know. If my questioner were to demand proof of such intercourse I should be able to offer him such evidence as I myself had received. That is the difference between your attitude and mine."

These two little anecdotes will, I think, make my position clear. What I have to tell in the following pages about the world of spirit is based on information received from those people who live there. In regard to proof of such communication, this is not the place to dilate upon it. Space will not permit this. I would, however, remark that the laity to-day are not content with a reference to Authority, based on the Bible and the

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Councils of the Early Church, for their eschatology.

As distinct from abstract doctrines of faith, love, purity and the like, when we are considering the conditions of the life beyond we are dealing with alleged facts. A scientist who states a fact is ready to offer proof of that fact. The laity have equal right to demand proof from the theologian when he is dealing with facts relative to life after death. This proof is available to any who are willing to pursue the matter scientifically; that is, by experiment. I myself have done this and have proved the case to my entire satisfaction. My readers can do the same.

There is one basic fact to keep in mind. All transactions between the world of matter and the world of spirit depend on the present possession of a spiritual body, which is sometimes called the soul. This spiritual body is a replica of the material body and reproduces in itself all the senses of that body. It is the point of contact between the carnate and the discarnate.

Thus Clairvoyance is the dimming of the eyes of the material body and the simultaneous opening of the eyes of the spiritual body. Clair-

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audience, likewise, is the suppression of the outer hearing and the opening of the inner hearing.

The Direct Voice is a voice which acts on the tympanum of the material ear through the medium of atmospheric waves, exactly as the human voice does. Materialization is the clothing of the spiritual body of the visitant from the other world with a tissue of material substance.

In these last two cases the requisite material used is drawn from the bodies of those present in the flesh and the surrounding atmosphere. Here the part played by the spiritual body is not so apparent. But it is probable that, in the complex process necessary to these delicate operations, the spiritual body is always partially detached from the material body and held intact while the material body is to a greater or lesser extent dematerialized. To the sum of such substance as is required for the effecting of these phenomena all those present contribute. The medium, or sensitive, is merely the focus of operations—no more than that.

In the case of trance, of inspirational and automatic writing and of levitation the spiritual body is also used in a similar manner.

These are the principal methods by which

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we are in intelligible contact with our friends who have crossed the border. What information I have here to give of the manner of their life has been gleaned from them by these means.

The first chapter of their narrative is concerned with the events just preceding death. They claim that this is quite in order as, having passed through the experience, they find that, contrary to the general expectation, life in the flesh and in the spirit is really not two separate lives. It is one life continued without any break. That is, there is no disembodied state covering an indefinite period between death and resurrection. They fall asleep here and awake there. When they fall asleep they are clothed with a body. When they awake they are clothed with a body which is as substantial, in correspondence with their new environment, as the old body of the flesh was to the environment of earth. It is like the falling asleep overnight and awaking in the morning.

The awaking is so natural that the un instructed usually do not at first grasp the fact that they have died. They observe that they are not in the bedroom they last remembered; they see those who have passed on through

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the gate of death, and think they are dreaming.

The sleep, however, is usually longer than our nightly sleep. Its duration is determined by circumstances, such as the length and nature of the illness and the ideas with which they have been imbued on earth. The usual time of slumber between death and waking is about three days. Those who go over with the fixed belief that they will be asleep until the "Last Day," when all humanity have been gathered in, remain in a comatose state for weeks or months or sometimes for years.

A lady who had known Queen Victoria in the earth life told me the other day that the Queen had visited her several times after her death. My friend was much touched by an incident which took place recently. She was joining in a séance with a few companions when the Queen announced herself and, going to this lady, said, "I have brought one of my soldiers to see you. He has just awakened."

Now, this lady is one of the nobility and observes the quaint custom, when her one-time sovereign comes to her, of standing and addressing her in the old manner. She explains her attitude in this way: "Yes, I know that in

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the great spirit world Victoria is just one of the citizens of the heavenly commonwealth. But when she comes down to the earth plane, well, I feel she comes as Queen, and I cannot break myself of the habit of regarding her as such."

So she said, "Madam, perhaps you are mistaken, owing to the difference of time in your world. This is the year 1925. He must be one of the soldiers who passed over in the late war." The Queen replied, "No, I am not mistaken. He is one of *my* soldiers. He passed over in the Boer War; and I want you to speak to him kindly." Incidentally, I may remark that I learn, from another source, that the late Queen is "living in quite a small house. It is her own wish."

The mental strain accompanying the last illness is, in some measure, transferred to the spirit body. A rest is therefore prescribed for a short period.

At death the sleeping soul is carried by friends to some place agreed upon in advance. The place selected is the one in which the sleeper will feel most "at home" on awaking. This may be some beautiful chamber in his future home or in the home of one of his

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dear ones—father, mother, wife. It may be some bower in a garden of flowers, or some lovely forest glade, or one of the heavenly meadows, or the home of a friend who had passed over previously.

When the post-mortem rest is over he is taken by his friends to his home, which they have made ready for him. Said Jesus to his friends, “In my Father’s house there are many abodes. I go to prepare a place for you.”¹ In some way difficult to understand this home represents the qualities and experiences of the owner during his life on earth. This now forms his head-quarters from which he accompanies his friends on excursions into the cities and country parts adjacent. Visits are made to the dwellings of old friends. He is taken into the magnificent forests where the trees form avenues like the aisles of some great Gothic cathedral. He views the flowers, some of very large dimensions, of colours glorious in their purity. Some of these are colours we have not on earth. He is shown the glorious semi-transparent temples, colleges, palaces of the rulers and other architectural beauties of the heavenly land. Mountains, rivers, lakes make up the panorama of the

¹ John xiv, 2.

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grand domain. Thus he becomes "acclimated" to his new environment.

Next ensues the Judgment. The newly born spirit goes into retirement; he withdraws into the silence. Here a review of his past life is made in all its details. Every act must be appraised at its real worth and significance. Good deeds and thoughts are registered in their true light. He is made to understand why this and that incident happened. He sees how many episodes, which he had written down as disastrous, were permitted for his good. He sees false motives in their nakedness.

It is not altogether a pleasant experience. But it has its use. It is only by such an appraisement that he can get to know what he really is, his true character. So many things are misinterpreted and glossed over on earth. Not so in the spirit world. The character is writ upon the countenance and body of the individual clearly. "There shall I know even as I am known." All activity, progress and promotion is there based on actual reality and truth. No camouflage is permitted, no make-believe will stand the test of the heavenly light. All is "plain and open" there.

Then his real training begins. He is taught,

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first of all, how to manage his new body. The relation of the will to bodily action is more direct and intensive than on earth. The correspondence of the body with its environment is more subtle and more intimate. There is something at least analogous to a fourth dimension there.

Among other things, transport from place to place is more rapid. It is better expressed perhaps in terms of condition than of place, as we understand the word. But I must speak in earth language lest I become confusing. Aerial travel is the ordinary method adopted for long journeys. This is usually effected by an effort of the will, without mechanical appliances. These are sometimes used to add variety, but are not necessary and are employed for pleasure rather than for the business of the spheres.

He is now free to choose an occupation. It may be that on earth he was compelled, by circumstances of one kind or another, to follow some trade or profession which was not congenial. Now he has free choice. He may choose music, philosophy, architecture, navigation, medicine, physics. All these are taught in the colleges Over There. What acquired knowledge and skill are applicable to the

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heavenly realms are used in those realms. The remainder is transferred to the earth by way of inspiration. For not only poets and musicians and kindred souls of earth, but all workers in every branch of useful enterprise are inspired also more than they know.

I have not touched on the darker side of spiritual life. Even here, in the flesh, there are saints and devils, both in plenty. That I know. But I take it that those who shall read these pages are neither one nor other of these. You, my readers, are much like myself, just ordinary people in whom good and bad are mingled. You are not by any means perfect, but you are trying to do your best to lead a clean life, to be kind to people when you have an opportunity, and you are ashamed when you fail in these things. If this be so, then hell is not for you.

Let us be quite clear on this point. Hells there are. They are of differing intensity of unhappiness and, indeed, of horror. Every man goes to that place which he has formed for himself in his earth life. That will be his starting-point in the next phase of existence. If he repents, he will begin to progress. If he still is blind to the true value of things, he will go

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lower down until he has reached his true level. Freewill is operative there as on earth.

No one can exaggerate the horror of those lower hells where moral corruption takes visible form in filth and squalidness. Here go the murderer, the suicide, the lady who in earth life has lived delicately and selfishly, the man who, for self-gratification, has been ruthless in business or careless of the soul of the girl who gave him her love. These find themselves in an environment of dimly lighted regions reeking with filth whose stench is suffocating. They are taunted, mocked and cruelly used by those who have gone there before them.

Some time, it may be ages hence, humiliated, broken in spirit and weary, they will lift haggard and fearful faces and send out a cry for mercy. Some tiny ray of light from above has filtered down, through that thick gloom which has covered them with its suffocating torture, into their darkened souls. Then the long and painful upward path will begin.

Let that suffice. Angel missionaries descend to minister to them unseen. These devoted saints are chosen only from among the strongest, the stalwart in holiness. For the work is not without its dangers, and the anguish these

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endure while down there in the deeps of the spiritual underworld is often intense. They make the sacrifice for love's own sake and are content. Did not Jesus do the same for us—and for them also?

The social and industrial life of the spiritual world are one; religious life also. A man may boast here on earth that he is not a religious man. He will find, when he arrives in the spiritual spheres, that he will have to be religious. What I mean is that progress is in ratio to the enlargement of the spiritual vision. Work and devotion and even play are all linked up together in a way we do not here understand.

Having selected his line of service he will be incorporated in a band. The Leader of this band is one from a higher sphere. This Leader makes his head-quarters in the Sphere in which his band is located, but from time to time he visits his own proper heaven for rest and recuperation.

Promotion is gained by service. Service reacts on the one who serves, and gradually modifies and refines his nature. A time comes when he has progressed to the limit of his present sphere. His environment is no longer adequate to his expanded personality. He has

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grown in goodness and his inherent powers have increased in proportion. His body has kept pace with his progress. Responding to the inner spirit, it has become more beautiful, brighter and in substance more sublime. His present environment is no longer adequate to his comfort. He is ripe for transition to the sphere next in order of progress. Thither he goes to continue on higher, wider lines the work he has already begun so well.

From time to time he will visit the spirit friends he has left behind, to tell them of the greater glories of that higher state of life, to encourage them in their work and to bring them messages from other friends in his own sphere. Some time in the future he will, if so he elects, come back himself as Leader among those who have filled the places of himself and his comrades now all progressed into the higher ranks of service of the one Father of all.

This opens up the question of the constitution of the spheres. What is a sphere? Has it a boundary? Do the inhabitants live on its circumference or within it?

None of these queries can be answered. There are qualities which we cannot understand. We ourselves live in a universe of three dimen-

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sions : length, breadth and thickness. Let us postulate a world of intelligent beings living in an environment of two dimensions, length and breadth, such as a shadow has. How would you explain to one of those people what thickness is? Even so, when an inhabitant of the spiritual spheres speaks to us of his own four-dimensional world, he can only do so inadequately. This must ever be borne in mind when reading accounts of the life beyond the veil of matter.

The spheres are concentric about earth. The first is encompassed by the second; both are encompassed by the third, and so on. During our life on earth we assimilate into our natures the result of our mundane experiences. After death our personality is continuously enlarged and enriched by the experiences we pass through in the successive stages from sphere to sphere.

One who had progressed through several of the spheres gave me the following account :

“ In Earth the environment is objective very greatly. As you rise in the spheres near and nearer to the Central Energy, whom we call God, the environment becomes the more sublimated in substance. It is therefore the more easily moulded into conformity with the wills of those who inhabit. So, I say, their

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environment becomes more and more subjective the higher we go. This is another way of saying that these High Beings, because they absorb more of their environment into themselves, become, *ipso facto*, the more universal. They compass within themselves more content of space, or being, or what other counter you will to use to reckon them up in their several degrees of power.

“The Creator sums up, and includes within Himself, the whole of space, or being, and so becomes universally Subjective. He is His own environment. Considered from the innermost outward this is Omnipresence, and inversely it is Unity.

“Here, and here alone, is Being raised to its highest intensity of silence and stillness. It is here resident in that white heat of static energy continuously operative. This is paradox, for paradox alone is competent to express to you, and to us who speak to you, the Omnipotence of that One who is neither subjective nor objective, but eternally persists, the One Great Is of all Being ; the sole I Am.”

As a rule at death people pass into the third or fourth sphere, some into a higher, others into

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one of the lower spheres. It depends on the spiritual altitude reached during life on earth.

It is impossible to say how many spheres there be. The possibility is that they are innumerable. The highest with which we have any established communication is the Christ Sphere. This sphere and those below it are numbered for our convenience sometimes as seven, sometimes as ten, sometimes as fifteen. This division is quite arbitrary. It is a concession to our mental limitations only. Above the Christ Sphere is the Home of the Father, Himself a Manifestation of some Realm of Being beyond. Thus Jesus taught us to pray to "Our Father who art in the heavens," whose Presence fills all the heavenly spheres.¹

Each planet has its complement of spheres. Where these planetary spheres overlap and blend into inter-planetary spheres, and beyond into spheres which are inter-stellar, we do not know. We are told it is so, and have to be content with that.

One of my spirit communicators put it in this way : "We here have come to know that Spirit, sublime as it is in essence, is not the sum of Being. As beyond the realm of the

¹ Matt. vi, 9; Luke xi, 2.

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material stretches the spiritual, so beyond those far and distant heights of light impenetrable, and holiness in awful purity towards which we think our way, there lies Being which is not Spirit alone, but which into Itself absorbs all that Spirit is at its whitest sublimity, and encompasses the sum total of spirit resultant in a universe of sublimity higher still.

“ As the light of a planet is but a small part of the outgoings of the central sun, and reflects back that light tinctured by its own planetary quality, so matter receives of spirit, and, in like manner, contributes its own small ingredient to the qualification and enrichment of the spiritual universe. As the Sun, in his turn, is of a system much greater than himself, and but one unit of a constellation of suns, so Spirit is but part of a universe of Being of magnitude and sublimity beyond our ken. And even a constellation is in itself a unit of a vast aggregation —but we will here cease to apply the analogy lest we become lost in wonderment, when we would rather find our way along the road of reason and understanding.

“ Let us therefore follow the Christ on His heavenly way, remembering that, being lifted up and exalted, He draws all men after Him,

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trailing His myriads along the heavenly road among the glories of the spheres towards the Home from whence He came, that where He is they might also be one day.

“ As the ages blend into ages yet to come, so the glory of the Christ intensifies, for every new recruit coming into His army adds a spark to the lustre of His shining Kingdom, which is viewed, so we are told, by those who stand aloft on the dizzy heights of the Realm which is most distant and lofty of all, as in the realm of matter you view a distant star. In the ocean of spirit all the Spheres of the Christ are gathered into one great Star, and can be viewed exteriorly by those who dwell on high. That is not possible for us adequately to comprehend, yet we may get some small idea of its meaning thus :

“ From the earth you are unable to see the Solar System as a unit, for you are in the midst of that system and a part of it. But one standing aloft on Arcturus would see one small sphere of light, and in that sphere would be comprised your Sun and his planets and their moons. So do you view Arcturus and the other millions of the stars you see from Earth. So the Kingdom and Spheres of the Christ are viewed from the Realm afar, and age by age that System grows

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in brightness as the races which go to make up the whole evolve more and more out of the material into the spiritual. In this I speak of the whole spiritual economy as one star, and Those Who are placed to view it are They Who dwell on those far steppes of Being which are beyond the realms of Spirit in the great Void of the Unknown and Incomprehensible."

Another gave me another view of the matter in a hymn which was sung at one of the great festivals held in a sphere somewhat advanced. I append it here :

A Hymn of the Christ Creative

BEING was, and from the heart of Being came forth God.

GOD thought, and from His Mind the Word became.

The WORD went far abroad, but with Him went God. For God was the Life of the Word, and through the Word God's Life passed onward into Form.

So MAN became in essence, and emerged from his first eternity a creature of the Heart and Mind of God. And the Word gave to him the heart of angels and the form of man.

Right worthy is the CHRIST MANIFEST, for He it is Who, through the Word, comes forth of God, and so declares God's purpose ; and His life through Him is poured upon the family of angels and of men.

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This is God Manifest, through the Word, by the Christ in angels and men. This is the Body of God.

When the Word spoke forth the will and purpose of God the outer space took on a semblance of matter, out of which matter was made ; and it reflected back the rays of light which came from God, through the Word.

This is the Mantle of God, and of His Word, and of the Christ.

And planets danced to the music of the Word, for they were glad when they heard His Voice, because by His Voice alone might they hear of their Creator's Love, Who speaks to them through His Word.

These are the Jewels which begem the Mantle of God.

So from Being came forth God, and from God came the Word, and of the Word was the Christ of God, ordained to Kingship of the Worlds for their salvation.

And in the eternities shall man follow Him, after the long journey in places strange, and some most desolate, homeward, Godward, in the evening of the day whose hours are eternities, and whose Noon is now.

This shall be the Kingdom of God, and of His Christ.

OUR UNSEEN OBSERVERS

BY THE REV. C. DRAYTON THOMAS

Author of "Some New Evidence for Human Survival"

Far off thou art, but ever nigh ;
I have thee still, and I rejoice ;
I prosper, circled with thy voice ;
I shall not lose thee though I die.

(*In Memoriam.*)

IN thinking of those whom we knew intimately before they passed into the Beyond, we ask what their present surroundings may be, their general manner of life and their occupations? We realize that they may be aware of regions where happy souls are far in advance of them, and also of regions where dwell souls as yet unfitted for realms of happiness. We ask whether our friends are able to hold intercourse with inhabitants so diverse, receiving assistance from those above, and offering help to those below?

But the question more immediately concerning us is the degree in which they retain their touch with earth. Can they visit those they

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love and inform themselves of our doings? This is the question dealt with in the present chapter.

We can reasonably assume that friends would return if they found no insuperable barrier. Natural instincts of affection would prompt them to keep in touch with us. Their new and varied interests would neither lessen love, nor obliterate memory of home and friends. I am speaking of those who had genuine affection for us. Our respective positions bear some analogy to the separation entailed by removal to a distant land, when one of a group leaves the old home and finds a new one amid surroundings which quickly engross his attention and activities. However busy the emigrant may be, he is not so preoccupied that he forgets his former home; he desires news of those remaining there, and keeps himself informed of their progressive interests, so far as postal facilities permit. Not only so, but now and again he greatly wishes it were possible to look in upon his friends and personally observe their actions and surroundings. And if, as years proceed, one and another, deciding to follow his example, make the journey to his country, he will arrange to be present at their landing and be among the first to welcome them.

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Is it not natural that these promptings of interest and affection should persist in those who have left us for the life beyond, and that, so far as they are able, they will keep in touch with us, and one day welcome us on our arrival there?

We will now consider the data at disposal. These include :

1. Experiences of dying persons and other types of clairvoyance.
2. Communications through psychic channels, comprising—

Descriptions of awakening after death.
Our friends' assurances of continued knowledge about us.

Proofs of their acquaintance with our life and surroundings.

Experiences of Dying Persons.—Light is thrown upon our inquiry by the statements of dying persons. Much evidence is already collected which indicates that, in some instances, the inner sight of those near death is sufficiently “opened”¹ to permit of their seeing

¹ Eyes opened ; see II Kings. vi, 17.—“ And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw; and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire about Elisha.” There are reasons for thinking that our body is interpenetrated by an etheric duplicate by which, in moments of clairvoyance, we are made conscious of objects too ethereal to stimulate ordinary sight.

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visitants invisible to others. These forms they sometimes identify. Such evidence is occasionally discounted by the supposition that physical and mental exhaustion renders the remarks of dying persons indistinguishable from the wanderings of a delirious mind. Yet this is not always the case, some evidence being free from such uncertainty. Especially noteworthy are instances in which these visions were seen by young children whose minds were unversed in speculations about the After Life. Professor Charles Richet considers these eminently worthy of study, and he records several. The following is one of them :

A child of two years and seven months was named Ray. A baby brother of Ray's had lately died. Little Ray had repeated visions ; he constantly saw his brother sitting on a chair and calling him. "Mother," he said, "the little brother calls Ray ; he wants him with him." Another day he said, "Don't cry, the little brother smiles at Ray. Ray is going to him." The child's intelligence was much above that usual to his age. He died two months and seven days after the death of his brother. No one can doubt that he had some kind of premonitory vision ; and this is the more extraordinary as, at his age, he could not have understood the meaning of death.

The following is extracted from an account

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published in the *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*, June, 1918, p. 375 :

Daisy was the ten-year-old daughter of a Methodist minister. A brother named Allie had died seven months before Daisy's illness, and he seemed to be frequently with her during her last days. When asked questions which she could not readily answer, she would say, "Wait until Allie comes, and I will ask him." She spoke of herself as living in two worlds, and was able to see and speak to those who were invisible and inaudible to the watching parents.

After a visit by her Sunday School superintendent who had used the term, "Over the dark river," she asked her father what the words meant. He tried to explain, but she said, "It is all a mistake ; there is no river ; there is no curtain ; there is not even a line that separates this life from the other life. It is here and it is there, I know it is so, for I can see you and I can see them at the same time."

Daisy's Sunday School teacher had lost two children years before. The child had not heard anyone speak of them, nor had she seen their photographs ; yet when this lady came to see her Daisy remarked, "Your two children are here." "How can that be ? They were children when they died," said the teacher. Daisy answered, "Allie says that children do not stay children ; they grow up there as they would in this life."

After her sister Lulu had been singing a hymn about winged angels, she remarked, "Oh, Lulu, is it not strange ? We always thought that angels

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had wings ! But it is a mistake ; they don't have any." Lulu objected, " But they must have wings, else how do they fly down from heaven ? " " Oh, but they don't fly, they just come," Daisy answered.

When asked how she saw the angels, she said : " I do not see them all the time ; but when I do, the walls seem to go away, and I can see ever so far, and you couldn't begin to count the people ; some are near, and I know them ; others I have never seen before."

To her mother who was sitting by her side she said, " Dear Mamma, I do wish you could see Allie ; he is standing beside you. He says you cannot see him because your spirit eyes are closed." The mother, noticing that Daisy's lips did not move when she asked Allie questions, inquired how she spoke to him. The answer was, " We just talk with our think." When asked if Allie wore clothing, she described him as not having clothes like theirs, but " a white, beautiful something, fine and thin and glistening and white, yet without a fold or sign of thread in it, so that it could not be cloth."

Daisy's mind was clear to the last, as evidenced by her thoughtfulness for others !

Other Types of Clairvoyance.—The literature of psychical research provides abundant material for the study of clairvoyance. This faculty of inner vision is not uncommon, and, when carefully developed, can provide evidence which is often of a convincing character.

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It is sometimes quite spontaneous, as in the case here selected for illustration. A friend informs me that he and his wife adopted an infant girl on the mother's death. The child does not know that they are not her own parents and has not yet heard anything about her real mother. One morning, while the little child lay in her cot, she called out that a lady was standing by the window and looking at her. His wife could see no one, but told the child to ask the lady for her name. The child obeyed, saying, "Lady, what is your name?" Immediately she added, "She says her name is Ethel." His wife now suggested to the child that she should ask the lady to kiss her. The child did so, and then appeared to follow with her eyes the visitor's approach across the room towards her cot, lifted up her face as if to be kissed, and then lay down again. After a few moments she exclaimed with evident astonishment, "Why, Mother, the lady went away through the window without breaking the glass!" It all happened as if the child had seen, heard and felt; she exhibited no further interest or surprise. The incident derived an added significance from the fact that Ethel had been the name of the child's mother.

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Many instances of such spontaneous clairvoyance, in which deceased persons were seen by their relations, are recorded by Flammarion in his book, "After Death."¹

Descriptions of Awakening after Death.—
The second class of evidence comprises communications through psychic channels in which the speakers, after giving proof of their identity, describe their experiences on waking after death.

I select the following example. In a letter announcing the decease of an aged friend we had been informed that, during her last hours, she had been under the impression that her father and mother were in the room and that she had spoken as if to them. With this in mind, I took advantage of the first occasion on which she communicated with me through a trance-sensitive to ask if she could describe her experience in dying, and say whether she saw people before leaving her body. I gave no reason for asking this, and certainly did not mention her parents; it will be noticed that she speaks of them.

¹ Vol. 3 of the series, "Death and its Mystery," published by Fisher Unwin.

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You ask if I saw anyone before passing. I seemed lifted above the usual things and surroundings, and I had a dream or vision, I do not know what you would call it. It seemed at the time like a very wonderful, happy and peaceful dream, in which I was with, not only those who had passed over recently, but with Father and Mother and many relations whom I had not seen for a long, long time. Now you ask: Did I see them? Yes, I saw them, though not with physical sight, but I saw them. They were as satisfactory to me, as clear and distinct, as anything I had ever seen in my ordinary earth life.

Now I was not conscious of any change, or anything abrupt, but from that very happy dream I seemed to pass into a peaceful sleep, and I think I emerged into a more or less conscious state, now and again, because I seemed occasionally aware that there were people whom I knew and loved who were near me, and taking care of me, and I was quite content to let it be so.

I hear now that I slept for three or four days. But when I woke, completely awoke, I felt refreshed, and so much younger and better in every way than I had felt for many years. . . .

And now here we are all together again, all the people I used to know and love; all are here at their best, best time, best health, best everything. . . .

I have received several such accounts from friends who gave satisfactory evidence of their

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identity. They agree in stating that loved ones gone before welcomed them on their awakening.

It is significant to find this agreement between records of experiences derived from such different sources—persons approaching death, and those awaking from it. Their united testimony is proof that our friends keep themselves informed of us and will be among the first to welcome us in the Beyond. It justifies the anticipation so often expressed in hymn and poem :

So long Thy power hath blessed me, sure, it still will
lead me on
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till the
night is gone,
And with the morn those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

(NEWMAN.)

I shrink from unaccustomed glory,
I dread the myriad-voicéd strain ;
Give me the unforgotten faces,
And let my lost ones speak again.

He will not chide my mortal yearning
Who is our Brother and our Friend ;
In whose full life, divine and human,
The heavenly and the earthly blend.

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I go to find my lost and mourned for
Safe in Thy sheltering goodness still,
And all that hope and faith foreshadow
Made perfect in Thy holy will !

(WHITTIER.—*What the Traveller said at Sunset.*)

I cannot make it seem a day of dread
When from this earth my soul shall journey out
To that still dearer country of the dead
And join the lost ones, so long dreamed about.
I love this world, yet shall I love to go
And meet the friends who wait for me I know.

And so, for me, there is no sting to death.
And so, the grave has lost its victory.
It is but crossing with a bated breath
And white, set face, a little strip of sea,
To find the loved ones waiting on the shore
More beautiful, more precious than before !

(ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.)

Our Friends' Assurances of Continued Knowledge About Us.—This, like the preceding, is dependent upon psychic channels, and comprises statements made by communicators about their ability to see us, to visit our homes, and to keep themselves aware of our manner of life. I have repeatedly received these definite assertions from friends whose identity has been demonstrated by convincing

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methods ; indeed it is a very familiar feature of such communications, and, in essence, amounts to this : They notice much more about their friends on earth than they used to do when living here.

These declarations, be it noted, demand the more serious consideration because they occur in the midst of statements about matters which could be verified and which were subsequently found to be correct.

Proofs of their Acquaintance with Our Life and Surroundings. — The fourth class of evidence deals with concrete instances, of which the following is an example. It formed part of a long conversation in which my maternal grandfather was speaking of incidents relating to a period in my youth when holidays were usually spent at his house. These incidents were accurately remembered by him and recognized by me. He also alluded to family matters too remote for my recollection, but which my mother afterwards told me were correct. He then spoke of going to see my mother, and mentioned details which indicated *a present-day familiarity* with her surroundings. Among other remarks he said that he had noticed she had a picture

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of Prince Albert which was *placed near some music*. Now I felt quite sceptical about such a picture, as I was familiar with my mother's house and knew nothing which could be thus described.

Fortunately we were visiting my mother on the following day. To my surprise, on entering her drawing-room I saw, in a place of prominence close to the music cabinet and the piano, a copy of the celebrated engraving which represents Queen Victoria and Prince Albert with their young children clustered around them. Moreover I learnt that this picture had been given by a friend *only the week before* and placed where I now saw it *close to the music*. Picture, music cabinet and piano stood in line close together. The claim of my grandfather that he had been to the house was thus substantiated by his accurate reference to this picture so recently placed there; and it is the more noteworthy on account of the correct assertion that picture and music were close together. My mother resides a hundred miles from the sensitive in whose house I received this message.

Such illustrations could be multiplied. *During the past eight years my friends have given*

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indications of their intimate acquaintance with our family surroundings on nearly every occasion when I have conversed with them through a trance sensitive. References are made to my work, to conversations in our home, to places visited by me, to persons I meet, to intimate matters concerning my relations, and sometimes even to thoughts which have occupied my mind.

As a student of psychical research I am ever on the watch for indications of telepathy from other people's minds and for information which might conceivably have originated in my own subconsciousness. It has been my habit to study alternative explanations of the facts observed. Examination of the character, variety and number of these evidences, taken in conjunction with *their remarkable accuracy* and the inadequacy of alternative hypotheses to account for them, convinces me that my friends have been present with me at different times and places, and that they have been able to observe material objects, people, and even thoughts. Of special interest have been references to happenings in our home about which I had no knowledge at the time, but which were afterwards found to have been exactly as described. Lack of space forbids illus-

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tration ; I can only offer my conclusion and aver that it is warranted by facts carefully observed and minutely recorded year after year.

I have now outlined the data which, as it seems to me, provide an answer to the question, Can our loved ones in the life beyond death visit us and inform themselves of our doings? We find reason for concluding that they have the ability to do this :

1. In what is told us by those who, in their last hours, attain some degree of clairvoyance and who recognize deceased friends around them. The exercise of this clairvoyant faculty by other persons provides evidence supporting the reality of these visions seen by the dying.
2. In experiences of trance mediumship and other methods of psychic communication ; for many of those who speak with us tell how they were welcomed after death by friends who had been aware of their passing.
3. In statements of our communicators, who repeatedly claim ability to observe us and to know many things about our life.

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4. In the proofs of this claim, found in collections of verified facts observed and recorded by conscientious and independent investigators.

But the most convincing proof is ever a personal one. Evidence offered by others, from the wealth of their own experience, becomes second hand on reaching us, and so loses much of its cogency and force. My own assurance has been founded upon personal experience; it is but confirmed and supplemented by that of others.

To those who do not possess this first-hand knowledge I would say with all the conviction of a Christian minister: *Though our “dead” are unseen, they are not unseeing; love prompts their frequent return; and though we may seem to have lost touch with them, they continue in very intimate relationship with us.*

If I were “dead,” I should be nearer you
Than I am now when standing by your side;
For then, the barriers that now divide
Our souls were nothing, I should watch o’er you,
Fill and sustain you with the fervent tide
Of all-pervading Life that courses thro’
The Eternal me, until in time, you too
Shook off this chrysalis shell of life, and “died.”

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Then through vast realms of space no thought has spanned

Into the ecstasy no voice has sung
In Love's own Kingdom of Infinity,
Wise beyond knowledge, yet for ever young,
Through all the Aeons of Eternity,
Blissful as children, we'll pass hand in hand.

Thus does “the life of the world to come” take in our thought a more familiar aspect. No longer is it the undiscovered country from which no traveller returns; for messengers have been coming and going, and a fresh significance is given to Jacob’s dream of a ladder which reached to heaven. And even as Jacob turned from contemplation of those who came and went thereon, because he found himself in the presence of his Lord, so do we look beyond these friends who greet us from their shining world, until we realize with clearer consciousness *One* who is above all others, and whose name is Love.

MY TESTIMONY

By ROBERT BLATCHFORD

SINCE I have begun to study spiritualism I have been very much puzzled and amused by some of its critical opponents. For instance, the conjurers. I always admired conjurers. They are remarkably clever and entertaining folk and I never could see through any one of their tricks. But when they claim that they can produce any phenomena which spiritualist mediums can produce, they tempt me into smiles. They cannot.

For instance, I went to see Mrs. Osborne Leonard. Mrs. Osborne Leonard went into a trance and someone spoke to me in a childish voice with a foreign accent and told me a great many things about my home and my work and myself and my dead friends. Some of these things I knew and some I did not know. But they were all true.

Now suppose we allow a conjurer to assert that the childish voice was the disguised voice

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of Mrs. Leonard. And suppose we allow the conjurer to pretend that he is the owner of that voice. Can any conjurer sit down in a chair, go into a trance, or pretend to, and tell me with the voice and accent of "Feda" a number of true things about my home and my work and my dead friends : things which the conjurer did not know, things he has never heard, things I have never told him? He cannot.

Conjurors are very fond of challenging mediums to tests. Here is a test for any one of them. Feda told me when one of my uncles died and what he died of. She described him accurately in detail. Can any conjurer tell me anything like that by simply pretending to be asleep? Feda told me I was to write a certain book. I had never mentioned such a book to anyone; not even to my wife or daughters. Could any conjurer tell me what other books I have in my mind? Why not, if Feda can? It is only a trick, they say. They can do anything, they say, which any medium can do. I invite them most politely to get on with it.

If another critic suggests that it is only thought-reading I will ask him if he can read my thoughts as Mrs. Leonard can, and I will ask him how Mrs. Leonard or any other person

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can read in my mind thoughts which are not there? Suppose one of my friends is seriously worried by domestic troubles but has never told me a word about it, and suppose Feda does tell me about it. She is telling me something I do not know. Not knowing it I cannot be thinking about it. And if these facts are not present in my thoughts how can thought-reading explain Feda's knowledge of them. Such a "trick" of Feda's cannot be explained by thought-reading, nor can it be duplicated by any thought-reader or conjurer.

The materialized spirit of a dead woman appears to a living friend: what we used to call a ghost. The conjurer says he can produce a ghost. He cannot. He can produce something which looks like a ghost. But it will not be the materialized spirit of a dead woman. A spiritualist claims that in his study a ghost appeared and was seen by a dozen of his friends. The conjurer laughs. "I can produce a ghost," he says. He cannot. Allow him his own stage and his apparatus and he can produce an illusion. But take him into the study where the ghost appeared and ask him to produce the same ghost of the same woman without machinery or preparation and he will fail.

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And I would gently point out to our friend the conjurer that an illusion is not a ghost. I could build up a figure with a sheet and a candle and a turnip. But that would not be a ghost. A phenomenon and an imitation of a phenomenon are two different things. A painted tree may be so like a tree as to deceive the eye; but it is not a tree. The conjurer may answer that the real ghost is not real but is a trick ghost. The spiritualist says: "Very well. Come and see us produce a ghost by a trick and then produce the same ghost in the same room by another trick."

The advocates of tests reckon without their host, or ghost. You must not expect to ring up the spirit of your mother as you ring up the chambermaid in a hotel. A medium is like a wireless receiver. He can only receive messages sent out. He cannot send messages to the other plane. If Mrs. Leonard goes into a trance she may get a message from the spirit of my friend Stokes; but only if Stokes wishes to send a message. She cannot ring up 7 B. J. Astral Plane and ask: "Is that you, Stokes?"

You cannot call spirits from the vasty deep, for they may not hear you or may not come if you call them. The critic seems to suppose

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that a medium can ring the bell, give a number, say : "Mrs. Leonard speaking," and ask to be "put on to Joan of Arc, or my Aunt Eliza." It is not fair to demand impossibilities from a medium and accuse him of fraud if he fails to accomplish them.

I am on the telephone. My friend Jaggers lives in London. I want to speak to Jaggers. But I do not know his number. Shall I ring up Central and demand speech of Jaggers? Jaggers may be in Glasgow, or Paris, or Timbuctoo. Shall I upbraid the "hello girl" because she cannot produce Jaggers? Under the like conditions could any conjurer produce Jaggers, like a bunny out of a hat?

Ring up the Astral Plane and ask for Jaggers? No. But I asked the leader of a South African circle if he could find my wife, and he asked the spirit of a dead South African soldier to seek her and, so far as I can judge by the evidence, he found her. Could a conjurer in Johannesburg have got a message from a woman who had died in England which would have been what we call evidential? No. But I got an evidential message through the dead soldier. His name was George Fisher and he was killed in France. He was killed in France

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four years before my wife died in England. A good trick, Mr. Conjuror.

The conjurer and other critics are very fond of what they call "test conditions." They think a medium can work in an atmosphere of suspicion. They remind me of Miss Havisham, who took a shy country boy into a gloomy room and said, "Now play." The poor lad could not play.

A medium must, in the nature of things, be abnormally sensitive. What is the effect of a hostile or unsympathetic audience upon a violinist, a singer, a speaker? I have known good speakers freeze up and lose their nerve when facing a cold, unfriendly audience. Imagine a Joseph Conrad writing a story under test conditions. A score of sceptical critics sitting in his study to see that he actually wrote it himself and did not crib from any books. For me the conjurer cuts no ice. He is not on in this act. Whatsoever spiritualist phenomena may be, they are not conjuring.

And there is the peculiar critic who says that all spiritualist messages are trivial. Suppose, when the planet Mars was nearest to us, a number of astronomers and other men of science had got a flashlight or wireless message from

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Mars. Had it been no more than "Hello!" ; had it been unreadable, would anybody have called the message trivial? What? A message from Mars?

And if any kind of message from another planet would be important, could any kind of message from the dead be trivial? If a man's dead wife tells him through a medium that she is alive, that is a message of the most tremendous value and significance. Any message from the dead, if it be genuine, is of greater importance than the most wonderful of scientific discoveries. It is more than a message : it is a revelation. If its genuineness could be proved it would revolutionize human thought ; it would change the whole aspect of human life. Trivial? The proof that there is no death : can that be looked upon as a trifle? Beside one such trivial message what signifies the greatest speech of the greatest statesman, the greatest book of the greatest author?

I do not presume to assert that communication between the living and the dead has been proved. Perhaps it cannot be proved. But I do assert that no criticism I have ever seen will account for all the spiritualist phenomena. I have met no argument or theory yet which ex-

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plains all the phenomena within my own limited personal experience.

I have analysed the evidence for survival over and over again. I have weighed and tested all the alternative theories. And I have not found any adequate explanation of spiritualist phenomena that covers all the facts except the explanation which spiritualists put forward and believe. As for the tests and challenges of the conjurers, they seem to me utterly valueless and silly. The conjurer is a psychical "flat earther." Pottering about over his challenges is a foolish waste of time.

III

THE RELATION OF CHRISTIANITY TO SPIRITUALISM

CHRISTIANITY AND SPIRITUALISM

BY THE REV. FREDERIC C. SPURR

1

The Gospel must be always good *news*. It must be new, it must present itself as a new message to every succeeding generation. A new thing. *That does not mean that there is any change in the central theme*, but it means that the central theme has to be restated afresh from century to century in terms which will appeal to a world that is always changing and growing—learning this new thing and unlearning that old thing—rejoicing in the truths which the prophets of science bring to us, *no less than in the truths which the long and always growing roll of Christian saintliness reveals of the power of the Gospel in the most diverse and often extraordinary forms.*—(ARCHBISHOP BERNARD, Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, at the Murren Conference, September, 1924.)

The whole army of Christian Saints, including the greatest: the Bernards, the Loyolas, the Luthers, the Foxes, the Wesleys, had their visions, voices, rapt conditions, guiding impressions and “openings.” They had these things because they had exalted sensibility, and *to such things persons of exalted sensibility are liable*. Beliefs are strengthened wherever automatisms corroborate them. Incursions from beyond the transmarginal region have a peculiar power to increase conviction. The inchoate sense of presence is infinitely stronger than conception,

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but, strong as it may be, it is seldom equal to the evidence of hallucination. Saints who actually see or hear their Saviour reach the acme of assurance.—(WM. JAMES, ‘Varieties of Religious Experience,’ p. 478.)

THERE are many new and strange stirrings of life in the modern world. One of the most significant of these is the movement towards a reunion of the Churches.

Responsible men of many communions have met, and continue to meet, at Lambeth, Oxford, Murren and other places, with a view to discovering ways and means of harmonizing the differences which exist in the various Churches of Christendom. No one body now claims to possess the whole “mind of Christ.” Each denomination has discovered that it has much to learn from other denominations, and the desire grows amongst wise men to find some synthesis in which the truths of the Gospel, now scattered in portions here and there, may be reassembled and become the common property of the entire Church; a store of common-wealth for the enrichment of all. This movement has been greatly furthered by the findings of recent Biblical scholarship and the consequent emergence of a sounder theology. “Texts” upon which our fathers built elaborate theological

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structures are no longer available for this purpose. The historical method of reading the Bible has given us a new perspective and many new interpretations. Just as the discovery of radium compelled dogmatic science to restate its old positions, so the new light upon the real intention and meaning of Holy Scripture has led to the discarding of many human accretions which had attached themselves to Christianity, but which were in no way part of its real life. For all this we can only thank God, Who is fulfilling the promise that His Spirit shall "guide into all truth." All who love the truth must listen to His voice and be profoundly grateful for every ray of light which illuminates our darkness. . . .

One clear thing has emerged in all the conferences and conversations which have taken place between Christians of various groups, and it is this, that however wide may be the differences between them in matters of theology and ecclesiastical polity, they all share a common spiritual life in Christ. They know Him in experience as the Redeemer and Lord of their lives. And this, after all, is the main thing. It is the one thing that matters. Whatever synthesis finally may be reached, spiritual

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experience must be the central and dominant factor in the situation. The rest is a matter of charity and of adjustment.

2

There is, however, another phase of this main movement which is of equal concern to all who have the interests of Christianity at heart. An increasing number of earnest Christian men view, with grave misgivings, the rapid growth of extra religious or *quasi* religious Societies or "Churches" which are marked by an almost complete divorce from organized Christianity, while they claim to be the only true exponents of "original" Christianity. It is said that a new organization of this kind springs up every year. For the moment we will ignore the smaller and less influential of these creations, and name the two largest, i.e. "Christian Science" and "Spiritualism." Both of these movements have grown rapidly, and both, as organized, are in opposition to what is called "orthodox Christianity" in any form. Of the two, Spiritualism is by far the more widely spread. It claims to have, throughout the world, more than ten millions of members. It

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had its rise in that fateful year 1848 in Rochester, New York. Since that time it has spread with great rapidity. It has a large literature, and it has attracted not a few notable men of science and of learning. And it has far more sympathizers in the *Christian Churches* than many persons suspect.

“Christian Science,” frankly, is in complete opposition to the Christian Church. It has a goddess of its own. It has a “philosophy” of its own. It has a special “Key” of its own to the Bible. It is also in opposition to modern science. Its “worship” is in a class apart. Its one great appeal to the public, its one apparent *raison d'être*, lies in the cures of physical disorders which are a speciality of its operations. The substantial cures are offered as evidence of the truth of its philosophy.

“Spiritualism,” on the other hand, includes men and women who remain loyal to the central truths of orthodox Christianity, and others who are avowedly rationalistic and hostile to our Faith. One well-known advocate of the first-named class wrote: “I am an Evangelical preacher of the Gospel. The great truths which fed the souls of Oliver Cromwell and Charles Haddon Spurgeon feed mine. I preach

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the same truths. But whereas before I held the belief in human survival as an act of faith, now I know it to be true.” That writer is a Baptist. But there are also many High Churchmen, Low Churchmen, Methodists and others who have announced themselves as “Spiritualists,” but who yet remain loyal to their own Churches and the common distinctive Christian doctrines. Many of these belong to no spiritualistic organization. Organized Spiritualism, however, is by no means everywhere one and the same thing. There is a distinct cleavage in the Spiritualistic ranks. Some of the Spiritualistic “Churches” are avowedly “Christian.” They use Christian hymns and prayers. They worship God through Jesus Christ our Lord. In most respects they resemble ordinary Christian Churches. Their speciality consists in *adding* to the generally accepted worship meetings for clairvoyance, trance speaking and “spirit communion.” Other Spiritualistic “Churches” have a formulated creed which in certain parts at least is definitely antagonistic to the Christian Faith as commonly held. It is not so much in its affirmations as in its denials that the antagonism lies.

The “Seven Principles of Spiritualism,” as

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set forth by the Spiritualists National Union, are as follow: "The fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, continuous existence, communion of spirits and ministry of angels, personal responsibility, compensation and retribution hereafter for good or ill done on earth, a path of endless progression." These principles are not peculiar to Spiritualism; they are not the creation of Spiritualism. They are all found in the New Testament. But the distinctive truths of Christianity centreing in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ and in His redemptive work for Man find no place in these "Principles." "We do not believe in any Special Divinity of Jesus Christ, nor do we believe in the forgiveness of sins. As a man sows so he must reap, and nothing can abrogate this law." Such is the statement of a well-known Spiritualistic lecturer. Spiritualism, then, for many, as Christian Science for others, has become a "religion," and it challenges the Faith of the Christian Church.

3

The general attitude of official Christianity—both "Catholic" and Protestant—towards

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both of these movements is that of aloofness, or suspicion, or utter and indiscriminate condemnation. The career of Mrs. Eddy is carefully examined, and, quite properly, shown to be full of defects. The false philosophy of "Christian Science" is easily demonstrated. And yet people leave the Churches and join the movement. Why? *Because of the cures.* The philosophy does not really count save in a secondary way. But the cures do, and they impress. In like manner the case stands with regard to Spiritualism: it is by some summarily dismissed as the "work of the devil." No distinction whatever is drawn between the truth or falsehood there may be in it. Wheat and chaff together are burned up. The person to whom the kindness of God permits the visit of an "angel" is classed indiscriminately with one who is "possessed with a devil." Others ridicule the whole thing as the work of disordered minds. More pass it by with a shudder as if they feared contamination. The *savant* settles the matter by a reference to the "subconscious." Meanwhile people are going over to Spiritualism in one or other of its sections.

The time surely has come when the Christian Church should try a new way, or rather revert

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to the old way prescribed by St. Paul, "Prove all things: hold fast to that which is good." Every error, it has been said, commences with the effort of homeless truth to find a dwelling-place. Denied hospitality at its true hearth-stone, it is driven forth into strange company, which, recognizing its worth, enriches itself at the expense of its guest.

There are some things to which the Christian Church has ceased to offer hospitality. Once she possessed the gift of spiritual healing. With the advance of science she delegated this work to physicians and surgeons, many of whom were simply physiologists and materialists, with no belief in the power of the Spirit—Divine or human. They dissected the body, explored the body, dosed the body—as if man were no more than body. The idea of prayer possessing a therapeutic value was derided by them. But things are changing. Science is enlarging its horizons. Mental and spiritual methods of healing *pari passu* with physical methods, or apart from them, have come into practice. Psychology is changing human estimates. "Spirit" is coming to its own.

What if "Christian Science," having perceived the truth of mental or spiritual healing,

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has torn it from its native environment and set it in a grotesque frame!—shall we repudiate both frame and truth, or would it not be wiser to *recover our own* and bring it back to its proper home? The *truth* there is in “Christian Science” is Christian truth, and it belongs no more to Mrs. Eddy and her cult than do the stars. Let the Christian Church recover her lost or dormant gift of spiritual healing, allying it with the later gifts of healing which science has brought to us from God, and she will absorb the good in “Christian Science,” the evil being left to perish of itself.

And so with Spiritualism. Whatever of truth this movement contains belongs to the whole body of truth and should become the common possession of all who love the truth, and in particular of those who believe that in Jesus Christ Divine truth was once incarnate in its most perfect human form, and that the Spirit of that same Jesus Christ is living and operating to-day in those lives which offer themselves to His lordship. Times innumerable in the history of Christianity have fresh rays from the Ancient Light fallen upon the Church, enabling it to perceive things which formerly were hidden, or forgotten, or unsuspected. What if Spiritual-

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ism, possessing authentic proof of the existence, and, in part, the activities of the spirit world, should be able to add to the Church the weapon of a new apologetic! Would it be politic to refuse this auxiliary because in some cases it has been turned into a weapon against the Faith?

It is questions like these which confront us to-day. The spirit of the time seeks for an understanding and a fuller *rapprochement* between the Churches themselves. But the further question of recovering for the Christian Church any forgotten Christian truths which others, not professedly Christian, have discovered, and in which they rejoice, is one of not less importance.

4

Confining ourselves henceforth to the question of Spiritualism as part of the larger question of psychic phenomena, the time is propitious for inquiring how much of it for all reasonable men and women is beyond dispute. Let us recapitulate certain well-known facts.

In 1882 the Society for Psychical Research was founded by Sir William Barrett and others for the purpose of investigating, in a scientific

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manner, and without any religious or philosophical bias, the various psychic phenomena which for long enough had compelled the attention of so many persons, largely as the result of their own experiences. During these forty-three years every class of phenomena has been carefully sifted and reported upon, from haunted houses to automatic writing. The reports are before the world in monumental volumes. In addition to these there are the volumes of M. Camille Flammarion, Dr. Hyslop and the records of numerous other private investigators. The literature upon this subject is now immense, and cannot here be referred to in detail. It is widely known. But beyond the investigators there is an increasing number of witnesses who have given to the world their story.

There are the remarkable experiments of Dr. Crawford of Belfast. This trained Doctor of Science constructed a delicate weighing machine which registered the changing weight of Miss Golightly during her trances—a test that cannot lie. Then there are the amazing psychic experiences which convinced Mr. Robert Blatchford in his seventieth year that his former denial of the reality of the spiritual world was worthless; the singular experiences of Sir

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Edward Marshall-Hall, K.C., which changed his outlook completely; and the almost sensational experiences of Mr. Dennis Bradley, which destroyed for ever his materialistic ideas.

5

Beyond these published records there are the confessions which private persons all over the country and indeed the world are continually making. For thirty years and more I have kept a record of psychic experiences which have been related to me in all parts of the world by persons nearly all of whom are highly esteemed Christians and many of whom are prominent leaders and workers. They include dignitaries of the Church of England, Swiss pastors, doctors, hard-headed business men, speakers at the Keswick Convention, Free Church ministers and others. The range of belief amongst them is wide, but they are all “Evangelical” people, not a few of whom would roundly denounce “Spiritualism.”

To re-tell the stories—and they run into hundreds—which have been told to me would require a thick volume all to itself. I can, therefore, only summarize their character. They

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include conversations with their departed friends, apparitions of dying persons at a distance (in one case) of 6,000 miles, long letters and communications in "automatic writing," direct voices of the "dead," heard, not by one person only, but by as many as ten persons at one time, photographs in full daylight upon which the face of a departed friend appeared, materializations and similar phenomena.

From the lips of the Rev. S. A. Tipple of Norwood, three of us, ministers of religion, heard, one Monday morning, a personal story which, coming from an ordinary person, would have been deemed incredible, but which, coming from him, compelled belief. It was the story of an "angel of the Lord" in his life, for more than two years: a story equal to any recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. I begged him to allow me to print it, but he refused permission during his lifetime on the ground that it would embarrass him with a correspondence, and he was already an old man.

6

But I have had numerous experiences of my own; of telepathic communication with my wife

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when we were separated by a distance of seven hundred miles—the very words she sent out to me reaching me; of the detailed rehearsal of a terrible domestic tragedy five weeks before it actually happened in life; of the coming to me at the very hour of his tragic death of my youngest boy, although his body was one hundred and fifty miles away, and a score of similar things. Let me relate three of them.

The first concerns a case of telepathy, or what seems to me to have been such. In 1913 I resigned my pastoral charge in Melbourne, Australia, and resolved to return home, allured, I am sorry to say, by a prospect which had little more substantiality than the mirage. I was really distressed to leave Melbourne at the height of a great influence and with a Sunday night audience of over 2,500 people. But my greatest distress was with respect to a successor. Naturally, I did not want that great work to suffer. I could not think of anyone who might undertake it. One night—a Tuesday—when going down Collins Street to my church, I suddenly saw—apparently in the sky—a name of four letters. It was the name of a minister in England of whom neither I, nor anyone else, had thought. I suggested his name to the

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Church; he was invited, and went. When writing to me, he mentioned the singular fact that on the very day I "saw" his name he, thirteen thousand miles away, had written a letter to me, but his wife, thinking that it might be misinterpreted as a self-invitation, persuaded him to destroy it—which he did. The letter was never sent.

A second experience relates also to Melbourne. One day a "medium" came over to see me. She explained that she had become a convinced and decided Christian and wished to become a member of a Christian Church, but she added, "Although I have become a Christian, I dare not deny the reality of my spirit experiences and spiritual gifts." I replied there was no need that she should. Then suddenly she exclaimed, "for months past two or three of us have noticed with you when you preach, the figure of a man who is sent by God to help you." The description she gave of him was quite general and unconvincing. Thereupon I handed her an armful of miscellaneous photographs of all kinds of people, asking her if any amongst them resembled the person she thought she saw. Presently she picked out a photograph, saying, "This is he." It was the

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photograph of a deceased French minister who first taught me the art of composing a discourse in logical fashion, and whose own discourses have been my models ever since. I named my eldest son after him. Never had I occasion to mention his name in Australia, and, had I done so, nobody would have recognized it. How did this lady get it, and the man with it?

The third experience—or series of experiences—relates to my beloved child, who was a little genius, and whose promising life was cut off by drowning at the end of his eighth year. Since he has passed over he has given us again and again unmistakable proofs that he lives on “the other side of life.” In the company of friends and when quite alone he has spoken to us, sometimes through a clairvoyant (who is *not* a “Spiritualist”) and sometimes directly, the most intimate details of his little earth life have been described to us—things that none but our two selves knew or could have known. Ten people, at once, have heard his familiar voice, as, *quite audibly* and directly, he has spoken to his mother and to me. He has mentioned matters of which we had no knowledge whatever, but which afterwards we found, upon inquiry, to be startlingly true. If I am now certain of any-

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thing I am certain of this, that my laddie's personality was not harmed by death and that he is with the Good Shepherd in the "Summerland." I believed this from the first; now I know it, or I know nothing of anything.

7

Experiences such as the foregoing are by no means simply modern. Similar experiences belong to the long history of the Church. The lives of the "saints" are full of them. John Wesley had a good deal to say about them. How are they to be explained? That, after all, is the vital question. Are they what they profess to be: real unveilings of the life beyond? Or are they due to hallucination, or to trickery, or to the devil? Is all this psychic experience part of a "vast conspiracy to ruin the Christian faith"? The S.P.R., both in England and America, finds that some of the phenomena has been fraudulently produced by persons who understood well the psychology of deception. Professor Hyslop went so far as to say that 90 per cent. of the professional mediums are dishonest.

Telepathy or mind reading explains many

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of the experiences. The subconscious mind can explain other experiences. There is admitted, generally, the existence of a mysterious psychic force, whether within or without ourselves, "the nature of which is unknown to us." But can we go farther and say there is evidence sufficient to convince us that under certain conditions God permits our departed friends to communicate with us? And, if so, is there anything in this that *necessarily* challenges the Christian Faith, or in any way weakens it?

8

Upon what is Christianity based if not on the reality of the Spirit world? God, whom we worship "is a Spirit"—so our Lord said. Man, too, is essentially a spirit. When we pray, we speak to a Spirit whom we have never seen, but Who makes Himself known to us through material media, whether it be a "Word" or a movement of our whole human nature. But chiefly we believe in the reality of the Spirit world because of the Resurrection of our Lord. If *He* be not risen, then certainly no one else has or can survive the shock of death. St. Paul staked all upon that one fact. And all clear and courageous thinking agrees with him. . . .

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The Churches hold fast to the Bible. They interpret it differently, but all believe that it is the record of the action of God in human life. But a great part of the Bible deals with disclosures of the Spirit world. Angels appear to men as the messengers of God, directing them, liberating them. Prophets like Balaam, Ezekiel and Daniel fall into "trance" and become mediums for conveying "the word of the Lord." Elisha is a great clairvoyant perceiving transactions occurring at a distance. Samuel as a child is clairaudient, and later becomes a "Seer" to whom men repair for guidance. These are but a few specimens taken at random from the pages of the Old Testament.

The climax of Spirit disclosure, however, comes with Jesus. At His nativity Angels sing to shepherds. At His baptism "the heaven is opened" and a voice speaks to Him. Later, a voice speaks audibly to Him, and it is heard by the people around (John 12). At the Transfiguration two men, long since departed this life, reappear and speak with Jesus. In Gethsemane an Angel appears to strengthen Him. Crucified, He "rises" from the dead and manifests Himself in a spiritual body which can be handled, but which is no longer subject to

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the laws of our material world. It materializes and then again is dissolved.

In the early Church a new epoch is inaugurated by a series of psychic phenomena, which is continued in various forms. The greatest of the Apostles was converted as the result of a spiritual appearance of Christ to him. Throughout his life he had many experiences of the action of the Spirit world upon him.

The Bible reader will be aware that these cases, just cited, are a few only out of very many of a similar nature. It is open to anyone bluntly to deny the truth of these records, or to explain them on "subjective" lines, or to invest them with a poetic glamour and so account for them. But to accept them as a true account of what took place and then to deny the truth of similar happenings in our own day is to ask for trouble. For men will (and do) properly argue that if they happened then they ought to happen now, and *that if they do not happen now, we may doubt if they happened then.*

Unless we are living in a world of utter illusion, where no experience can be trusted, there is now accumulated a vast body of evidence clearly showing that the Spirit world does, in

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the present day, disclose itself, under proper conditions, to men and women who fulfil those conditions. Dr. R. C. Gillie speaks for an increasing multitude when he says, “There are instances quite clear to me where those who have gone from us are allowed to communicate with us. Communications *do* come at times from the other side.” It is not a question of hypothesis; it is a question of fact. When the heaviest allowance for fraud and mistake has been made, the assured residuum is so overwhelming that it is fatuous to deny it.

9

And yet the Churches have a right to be cautious. For not everything that comes from that other world, or professes to come from it, can be trusted. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, with that fair-mindedness which is characteristic of him, frankly admits that there are “differences of opinion” amongst the Spirits, and that when they predict the future there may be an element of “speculation” in the business.

He has also reminded us that there is some “cold-blooded lying” on the part of the entities beyond. There is also some trickery on this

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side. The mind of the medium may deflect the message sent over. Impersonations also are by no means improbable. Certain of the "messages" sent are not worth receiving, others are vague and unconvincing. There is little of *real* "revelation" in what comes over from the other side. In some cases the supposed "messages" are a mere confirmation of the secret desires which fill the minds of the sitters, and they may be explained in quite another way. Remembering Bernadette of Lourdes, the maid of La Salette, Joan of Arc, George Fox and other visionaries, the need of caution becomes imperative. Sir Oliver Lodge says wisely that "this is not everybody's business."

In the present state of their development some men and women cannot, at present, respond to the vibrations of that higher world. All may, if they would, and one day probably they will. Further, there is a very real danger of "obsession." Men and women need to be very careful in their spirit companionships.

10

In no case can Spirit communion become a "religion" without inflicting grievous harm

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upon the worshipper. The essence of true religion is the personal communion of the soul with God, issuing in a spiritual life, which is marked by ethical qualities of the highest value. To obtain information about the state of our departed, to hear their voices, to speak to them, is unspeakably precious, but it is *not* religion : it has nothing to do with religion. It may be nothing more than a form of materialism.

For us who are Christians, “religion” is wrapped up with Jesus Christ our Lord. We believe in Him as our Redeemer and as the Creator of a true human character. We aspire to be “Christ’s men.” We believe that He is alive, the Lord of that other world, from which He operates by His Spirit upon all who are turned to Him. No information about this world or the next can take the place of personal communion with Jesus Christ. In communion with the living Lord we reach our highest life here below and therefore bear within ourselves the guarantee that death will not interrupt our fellowship with Him. But this does not rule out the possibility of fellowship with our departed loved ones, since, when they were with us on earth we communed with them as well as with Christ.

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Spiritualism has rendered the great service of restoring to us belief in the communion of Saints. Its grave defect, as *organized*, is that it finds no adequate place for Jesus Christ. Somehow it has missed Him. In any final synthesis, then, the Spiritualistic movement must give Jesus Christ His proper place. Until it does so it can never fulfil its real mission. It will remain crippled and ineffective. It would be a tragedy were a movement labelled "Spiritual" to perish because it lacked the dynamic whereby alone it could become truly spiritual.

11

The Churches too, on their part, will have to move out. The Spiritualistic movement is a challenge to the Church to recover the full Christian teaching about the future life. The traditional dogmas of heaven and hell have entirely lost their hold upon thinking people. Why? Because the forms in which they are clothed do not in any way fit the inner realities. The idea of a furnace of material fire, into which all the "wicked," no matter what their grade, are plunged, and in which they remain for

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eternity, is untrue to the spiritual conditions of that other world, untrue to any fair exegesis of the New Testament, untrue to the nature of God, untrue to the spirit of the Redeemer of men, and untrue to the demands of the most elementary justice.

The idea also of a static heaven into which all the “good” enter, no matter what *their* grade, is untrue to the plain declaration of our Lord and of His Apostles, and untrue to the law of spiritual progress.

There is urgent need that the Christian Church shall clear its mind about the whole question of the future life, shedding, once for all, these pictorial representations of heaven and hell which were long ago painted in the colours of an earlier time, but which are now seen to be entirely erroneous. Heaven and hell undoubtedly lie beyond. There is a law of sowing and reaping which none can avoid. There is a law of progression which binds all true souls. These truths need to be re-stated in spiritual terms and brought within the realm of clear thought and the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The New Testament contains consistent principles of the future life, and these need to be recovered. If to these experience of com-

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union with those who have gone over can add to our knowledge, we ought not to resent but to welcome it. The synthesis lies along these lines. When it is complete, we shall discover that a real experience of direct communion with the living Lord, a new statement of Christian truth concerning the hereafter, and personal experiences of fellowship with our loved ones on the other side (so far as God permits it), will combine to give to the Christian Faith a new splendour and a new and powerful appeal. The world is sunk in a slough of materialism. It does not believe in the hereafter, hence it does not fashion its life on right lines, and evermore it tends to the animal and settles its disputes by the methods of the jungle. Mankind can only be saved by a Spiritual revival, but it must be a *complete* revival.

II

BY SIR OLIVER LODGE

Introduction.—“ Religion ” is a vague and comprehensive term, having at least a double aspect. It has an ethical or practical side concerned with conduct and it has a theoretical side concerned with faith, which side is more properly called Theology. The two are interlocked : for conduct is a natural outcome of faith, which thereby demonstrates its reality.

“ Spiritualism ” may be regarded as a still vaguer term, signifying primarily a system of philosophy opposed to Materialism. But it, too, has a practical side ; and it is presumably the practices of Spiritualists which by religious people have been objected to. Some of these objections may be justified ; others appear to be mainly the result of ignorance.

I have been asked by the Editor¹ to explain the relations, so far as I can, between these two forms of idealism—the higher and more mystical and ancient form carried on by a

¹ The Editor of the *Guardian*, where this paper appeared.

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highly developed organization, namely, the Church in its broadest sense; and the lower, more definite and more modern form, which has no regular and recognized organization, but is carried on by individuals or by groups of individuals having a common aim. It may be called "more modern," though the records show that it is really as ancient as the other. The Bible, for instance, is full of both. But it has a modern development, which on one side is more closely associated with science than with religion: and its aim is not to be satisfied with vague aspirations and pious hope, but to ascertain the facts on which even religion must be based, to formulate them as far as possible and to make use of them as a guide to conduct.

Though unscientific in many of its methods, this modern development is an outcome of the era of science in which we live; and it is not debarred by feelings of reverence from exploring even the unknown and the mysterious. This by religious people is held to be presumptuous and beyond our scope; but a similar objection has been felt in the past to every kind of scientific exploration. We may be sure that we shall not discover anything really beyond

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our scope, that we can only ascertain what has still to be relegated to the unknown and mysterious by making an attempt to explore all the phenomena open to us, and as far as possible to ascertain their laws.

The subject is therefore liable to fall between two great organizations. It is not yet recognized as a branch of orthodox science; nor are its results accepted by the disciples of orthodox religion. Individuals have realized both its hope and its partial achievement, and many have sympathized with its aim, but the majority still stand aloof. It has been cultivated therefore by comparatively few, and it suffers, as well as benefits, from the lack of public recognition and official organization. The wayfaring man has taken it up, and may occasionally err therein. But, as always, there are certain things which are withheld from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes.

It may be charitably assumed that all earnest people are seekers after truth, that they have no wish to be deceived, and that they are bound to be faithful to such truth as they have been able to gather, or which may have been revealed to them. It is not to be supposed that any earnest group is willingly blind to any form of

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truth, whether it be the truths of theology or the truths of science, or the dimly perceived experiences which belong, as yet, fully to neither one branch nor the other. But though there is no willing blindness or any intended hostility to truth, there may be, and there is, much misunderstanding. And it is in the hope that some of this misunderstanding may be gradually removed that this chapter is written.

The Relation of Psychical Research to Religion in General.—By “psychical research” is intended a careful, and as far as possible exhaustive, investigation into those faculties of mankind which have not yet become familiar, and which have failed to attract universal attention. For there are obscure faculties, sometimes called supernormal faculties, which are not yet incorporated into orthodox psychology, though some of them are forcing their way into practical recognition by philosophers and medical practitioners. One of these is the phenomenon of hypnotism. So recently as my own youth, it was utterly discredited, believed in only by some whom it was the fashion to call “quacks and charlatans”;

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whereas now it has become a fairly recognized department of medical practice.

Another human faculty, not as yet so fully investigated, is clairvoyance, including telepathy, that is to say, the ascertainment of information by other than the usual channels; whether it be by what is called "mind-reading," which has never been explained, or by some still more unintelligible process, to which we have not a clue. The reading of sealed documents, the contents of which are not known to anyone present, is, perhaps, the simplest or most easily cited example of clairvoyant faculty: and this is not the place to discuss how far this apparent clairvoyance is or is not another variety of mind-reading. Nor is it the place to consider the evidence for such a faculty. Suffice it to say that many serious investigators are convinced that such a faculty exists. Some of them call it "cryptesthesia," and assume that it is due to some hyper-activity of the organs of sense, but they admit that they have no theory.

At present we have to ascertain the facts and leave a theory to the future. Such a waiting attitude is a commonplace of science. In the most modern physics we are familiar with

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it—e.g., in the recently discovered quantum, in the nature of gravitation, and in our relations to the ether generally. Facts may be known long before they are explained: and indeed a scientific explanation, even when attained, is never ultimate.

Other branches of psychic or metapsychic investigation are connected with the *lucidity* of certain persons in a trance state, and the powers of the subconscious generally. It is found that occurrences elsewhere, or in the past, or occasionally even in the future, are thus somehow decipherable; as if access to wider knowledge, or to the knowledge of other persons, were open to the liberated personality of the entranced medium. Or, more likely, as if information were communicated by other intelligences through his or her bodily organism as through a kind of telephone. Some regard this phenomenon one way, some another, but all who have had adequate experience admit its reality as well as its extraordinary or supernormal character.

The nature of *inspiration* is another branch, in which not much progress has been made. The fact has always been recognized: for the theory we still can wait. It has fortunately not

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been laid down *ex cathedra* on inadequate data. The inspiration of poets, the inspiration of saints and mystics, comes we know not how: we feel the vivifying breath of the Spirit but we may not trace as yet its proximate source. The temptation is to treat the products of inspiration as oracular, which perhaps they are, and as infallible, which they are not. We must not attribute infallibility to anything that reaches us through a human channel, whether it be a book or a church or any other medium.

I would not draw an antithesis by objecting to the phrase “verbal inspiration,” for surely the greatest poets are verbally inspired in the sense that what they have to say is perfectly expressed. We should study and reverence the great utterances; but it is superstitious folly to treat every utterance as of equal value. As Matthew Arnold eloquently urged, it is mechanical and illiterate to regard every part of a book or of a literature as equally authoritative throughout. Indeed this is not done now, save by those ultra-conservative good people who dare not let go of their anchorage in a rising tide, and who cling pathetically to submerged rocks. Yet, read intelligently,

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ancient documents are full of value and evolutionary instruction, and of unconscious corroboration or illustration of psychic truths; and inspiration is a great reality, a genuine avenue to truth, a beneficent fount which may grow and be of more and more service to us as time goes on and we become more receptive.

Other psychic phenomena, familiar enough as to the facts, but obscure in their theory, are those associated with sleep and dreams, which may be ranked among the minor activities of the subconscious. And lastly, and chiefly, the phenomenon of *Death*. It is, perhaps, principally in connexion with this subject of death that the present outcome of psychical research appears to be in conflict with traditional beliefs that have come down to us as portions of religious faith.

Psychical research is primarily an inquiry; and as such has no creed. But it has established the reality and truth of the phenomena which at present we group under hypnotism, telepathy, and a more or less limited clairvoyance: while most of the investigators have gradually become personally convinced that existence is continuous, that death is not the end; or, in

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popular phraseology, that man is an immortal being.

It may be said that that is no new discovery, that nearly every form of religion has held it, that it is a prime article of faith. Quite true, but it has not been till lately an article of scientific knowledge. It has been accepted as an article of faith, it has not been proven—not proven, that is, for the generality of mankind. The proof involves the definite verification of the assertion that those whom we call “the dead” or “the departed” have not only in some sense survived, but that they are still more or less in touch with us, and that occasionally they are able to demonstrate their continued existence and interest, by actual communication.

This is not really new, so far as statements and examples go. Religious literature is full of such supernormal communications. But the possibility has never been fully recognized, and has not widely been made use of as a comfort to the bereaved and as a means of obtaining initial information about the conditions of a future state. The beliefs of religious people on this subject are reverent but vague, so vague that the consolations legitimately derivable

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from knowledge are not forthcoming. For all practical purposes, the dead might as well be extinct.

But by psychic investigations, not only the existence, but the activities of the "dead" have been demonstrated; and the power of inter-communion has been shown to be a fact. This may be discredited. Not every investigator is yet convinced. The fact—if it be a fact—is a great one; and its complete demonstration takes time. I am sure that continued inquiry will demonstrate it to the full. Meanwhile it is quite legitimate to hold a different opinion. Belief is not to be coerced; nor should one who has been convinced by direct experience feel unduly impatient to convince others. Truth will make its way; he that believeth need not make haste; in quietness and confidence should be our strength.

It may be said that about death there are three main alternatives. First, the view of the philosophic materialists, which seems to be tacitly adopted by many of those who study the facts of physiology, anatomy, and biology generally; namely, that the bodily organism is the man, and that when the organism dies, intelligence ceases with the extinguishing of the

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brain, the man becomes extinct, he is really put in the grave, and his particles gradually return to the condition in which they can be utilized by other forms of life. On this view, the only survival which can be predicated, even for a great man, lies in his immortal works and the memory of his friends and disciples.

Next, there is what may be called the Calvinistic or ultra-Protestant view, which holds that death is by no means the end ; that there is a future existence to be taken up at some unknown future day, though the fate of the individual in that future existence is settled at the moment of death ; that further intercourse with him is forbidden and impossible ; while some even hold that prayers for him are hopeless, his state being definitely fixed for all eternity. There is an opposing view which holds out hope and proffers help, but only through recognized ecclesiastical channels, only through the Church, only by the intervention of its Saints, its Apostles and its Ordinances. This is not the place, however, even to indicate the variety of views that have been or may be held by religious people concerning the sequel to death. I only state the position taken by some, at any rate of the laity, in order to contrast it with the

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view taken by the Spiritualists, on what they consider good evidence.

I said that the outcome of psychical research was to establish not only survival, but the power of communication ; with difficulty doubtless, and subject to conditions, but still genuine intercourse, real conversation. And this, whether established or not, is the foundation on which the Spiritualists base their faith and their practices. Not all psychical researchers are Spiritualists by any means. Some have found themselves able to remain Materialists, especially on the Continent : though to me that seems likely to be only a temporary standpoint. Anyhow, they have no doubt about the facts : those they fully admit, it is the interpretation that they debate. But those who call themselves Spiritualists, having likewise no doubt about the establishment of supernormal facts, include among those facts—as an inevitable deduction from a mass of experience—the power of communion with the departed. They consider that not only by trivial domestic messages can they establish the survival of their lost ones, but also that by further conversation they can acquire some notion of the conditions of existence on the other side of death.

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Indeed, some of them are so impressed with the beauty of their creed, the enhanced value it gives to life, the relief it gives to sorrow, the comfort it holds out to the bereaved, and generally are so full of the joy and faith with which it suffuses existence, that they long to be the privileged messengers of what seems to them not a new but a resuscitated gospel, and they try enthusiastically to share their conviction with the whole human race.

The Spiritualist's Creed.—So the creed of the Spiritualists may be stated thus: That death, so far from being an end, is not even an interruption of continuity, that it is an episode in continuous existence, an adventure through which every individual has to pass: that the body is not the man, but his instrument, a mechanism which his own real self gradually constructed, and more and more inhabited, during the period of its incarnation in matter; but that when set free from the flesh, his more unhampered, more real, more wakeful, more intelligent, more hopeful existence begins.

This period of earth-life is undoubtedly important—singularly important and reverently to

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be protected and sustained to the end ; for upon it depends the state in which he enters on his future career. His character, his habits, his knowledge, his experience, his memory, he takes with him. Those things are all he does take ; and with them, for better, for worse, he is permanently endowed. There is no waste of acquirement, no extinction of budding powers, the progress that was begun here is continued there. He may still, in a wider, larger sense, rise on stepping-stones of his dead self to higher things.

There is no long period of quiescence. After an interval of recovery from the weakness of illness, or the shock of wounds, he takes up the thread of his life ; he finds friends willing to help ; he is not isolated or solitary, save only when he has led here a completely selfish life. He enters on the state for which he is fit, whether it be higher or lower ; he finds surroundings which do not seem to him alien or strange, he may indeed be surprised at their familiarity ; he recognizes friends, and is able to interpret his new environment in much the old way. Probably because manner of interpretation depends mainly on the percipient, even here we can form no adequate conception

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of objective reality ; we are only conscious of the universe through human interpretation ; and that power of interpretation continues.

There are many grades of existence, many resting-places. The ordinary man is not fit for the higher states as yet. There are lower states also, from which his friends hope he is immune. But such state as he is fit for, in that he finds himself, and thence, by service and love and duty, he can rise, as his spirit progresses—can rise without limit. Or it may be that, inspired with missionary enterprise, he can descend to lower regions for a time, to help the spirits in prison, to assist, instruct and encourage those who did not rise to their opportunities even when here, and those still more debased, in lower depths, who, by either cruelty or selfishness, have degraded themselves below the level of normal humanity. But even for them there is hope : the possibility of reform is not denied to them ; but they must themselves seek it. They must struggle upward. Effort continues in every grade. Time seems to be the essence of existence, even there ; and after a lapse of time, differing for different individuals, they may emerge from their darkness into the fellowship of others.

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Those already in the regions of light and life and love can set their faces towards the heights, whence may be vouchsafed something akin to what has been called “the beatific vision”; at first only granted momentarily until they are able to stand it; then more frequently. So, in due time, they gradually pass into regions far above our ken, on their way to what must seem to us infinity.

Well, it is a hopeful creed; it is a creed likely to bear good fruit in the conduct of life. It is a creed full of responsibility; it ennobles self-sacrifice. It seems to those who hold it worthy of their conceptions of the divine order. And, what is more, it seems to them undeniably true.

The Relationship of Spiritualism to Christianity.—Here I enter upon deeper ground, and must tread softly. But, so far as I am entitled to form an opinion, there is nothing in the Spiritualistic creed, at least as above formulated, which is alien to the Christian faith. The only Individual of whom we have been in any sense fully informed did not remain associated with a material body: He possessed a spiritual body—or suitable instrument of mani-

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festation—similar in appearance to the old one but less restricted. Through it He was able to communicate with survivors ; He descended into lower regions to help the outcast ; He accompanied the penitent thief to the intermediate state called “Paradise” ; and He ascended into supernal regions beyond the scope of ordinary humanity ; a state which can only be spoken of in mystical language, where, however, He is still accessible, and whence He can come, and does come, in the beauty of His character, to judge both the quick and the dead.

It will be asked, however, do all Spiritualists think that? Do they all accept the Eternal Christ as having been manifested in Jesus of Nazareth? Probably not : though the majority do. I have known of a few who felt hostile to Christianity, or rather to some travesty of Christianity which they thought the Churches held. Of course there may be some utterly and seriously mistaken, but for the most part those Spiritualists who hold aloof from religious services, and seek to found a religion of their own, have been repelled, not by the genuine essence of Christianity, but by superimposed ecclesiasticism and dogma, and other forms of human organization. I think they are unwise : I think

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that organization should be all to the good, and that the mistakes of any human establishment should be amended and gradually improved away, the whole not being cast aside as of no value. The Church is an organization of great value : it is a mighty weapon for the overcoming of evil and the establishment of good. It surely does aim at the establishment of God's Kingdom upon earth. In carrying this aim out it makes mistakes. It has shown itself blind to many spiritual realities ; it is not making use of all the means of Grace which are now available. But its officers are distributed through the length and breadth of the land ; they are treated with respect, listened to with some attention ; and, when it is felt that they have a living truth to proclaim, multitudes flock to hear them.

At the present time there is a real demand for truth and reality. People do not wish to be in ignorance about higher things or uninformed about the destiny of man. But if they have to depend entirely on the inspiration of the past, if there is no living spirit active and alert to-day, if inspiration has ceased, and truth has to be dug out of ancient documents, with no other vital channels open, then numbers will drift away, some to Materialism, some to

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Spiritualism. "The hungry sheep look up and are not fed."

What is the remedy? Each individual must decide on what immediate small practical step can be taken. Something should be done, something will be done, if not by the present generation, by the next. Not offences only, but blessings also, are inevitable in the long run. It must needs be that blessings come, and joy be to that man by whom they come.

It is a hopeful sign of the times that many are seeking more knowledge, even in obscure and prejudiced directions. Pre-judgment of these things is not wise. A *prima facie* case has been made out. Innumerable mourners have already been helped: much happiness has been secured on both sides of the veil. For the pain of separation is not limited to our side alone, and is grievously enhanced by witnessing hopeless grief or lamentable despair. There should be no such outcry against the heavens, no such sense of utter irretrievable loss. Love has bridged the chasm.

The doctrines of the Spiritualists, the offering occasionally of opportunities for personal intercourse, the sense of communion with the departed, have brought hope and comfort to

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many thousands. That there are faults and weaknesses, credulities and superstitions, associated with or grouped round about the subject, no one would seek to deny. Is it not necessarily so with any widespread movement? The movement needs guiding: it needs sanity and reverence and modesty and open-mindedness: it should not seek to cut itself off from the great traditions of the past. Nor should we seek to limit ourselves to those either. The facts on which Spiritualism have been based should be brought into the service of religion.

How to do this well and wisely I know not. But we are guided and helped. Wisdom will be granted to those who try, and will be denied to those who hold aloof. The existence of a spiritual world has been established, or is in process of being established, by the methods of science; and that is the basic foundation of all religion.

I for one have learnt that human existence, as we know it, is but a part of the whole. The communion of saints, aye, and of sinners too, is real; there was no isolation of sinners in the days of Authority, they were so treated that some became saints; the seeking and the saving was no temporary effort, but a perennial blessed

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activity, in which we too may share. Souls are not extinguished, progress is infinite. The reality of mutual aid, both here and hereafter, and the efficacy of prayer, have become, not articles of faith alone, but things of direct experience. The region of knowledge is in some sort encroaching on the region of faith. But the region of faith is infinite; and knowledge, though very finite, genuinely grows from more to more. A beam in darkness—let it grow!

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